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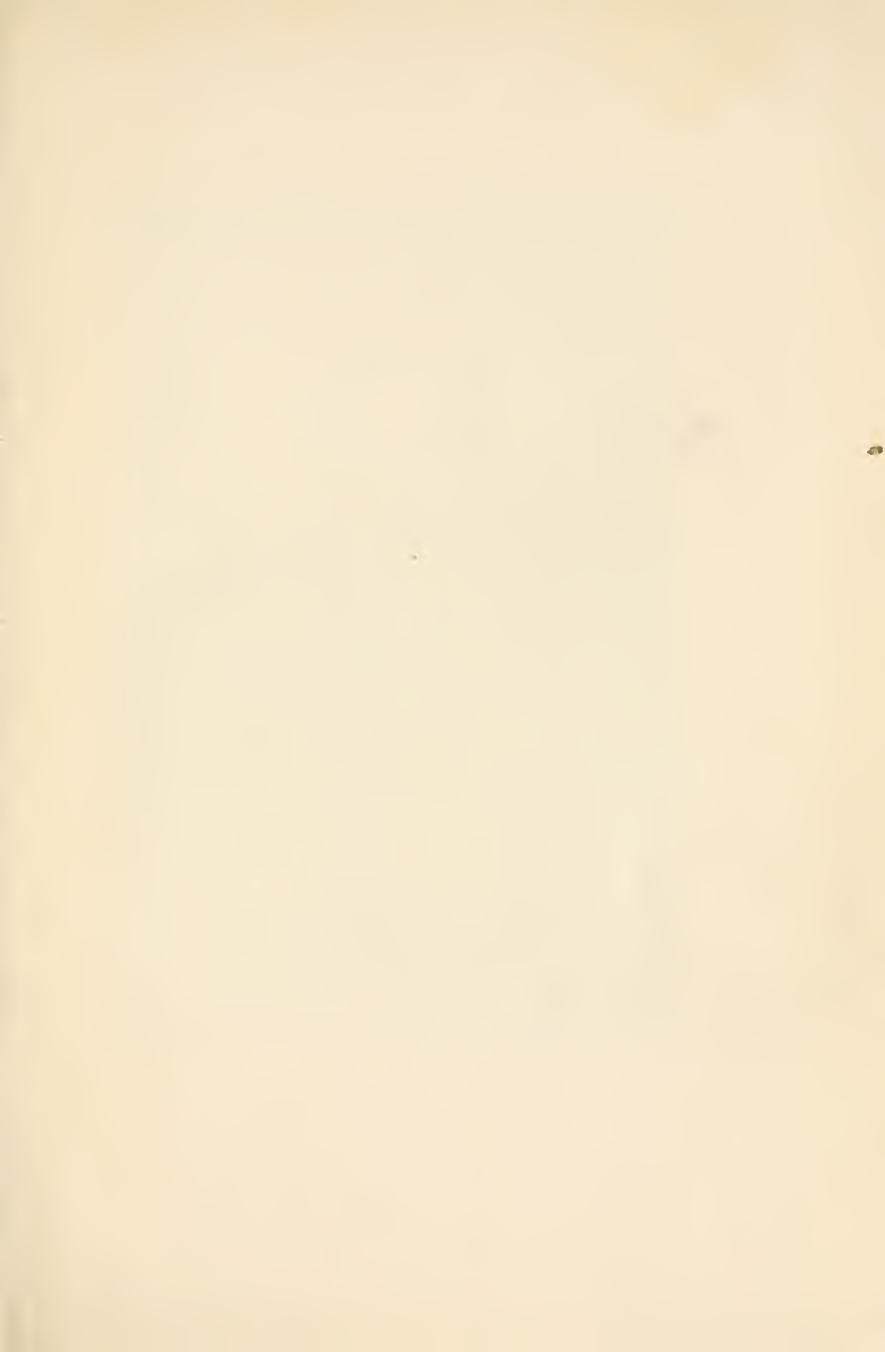














FROM THE HEALY PORTRAIT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER  
OF CHARLESTON.

LIFE OF  
JOHN C. CALHOUN.



BEING A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL  
EVENTS OF HIS CAREER AND AN  
ACCOUNT OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



—BY—

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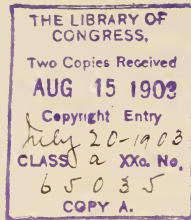


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u. m. v. 11 June 17

To American citizens everywhere, who revere the Union as it came from the hands of its framers, in the hope of directing their attention afresh to the example and teaching of him who better than any other has declared the great political law, according to whose inexorable working Americans in the past fell into strife and disunion, and continued disregard of which will not less surely lead in the future, to further disorder and degradation, this volume, is with great earnestness and candor of spirit dedicated.

"The past is past, and cannot be recalled; and a reference to it is only profitable as furnishing lessons of experience."—Calhoun.

"I desire to die in the discharge of my duty; I have an unshaken reliance upon the providence of God."—Calhoun.

"It is a serious misfortune to run half a century ahead of the knowledge of the day; and if a man is bent on doing this, he should make up his mind to meet the consequences, and count the cost. Men of moderate intellect disapprove, the timid are alarmed, foes are excited, and friends stand aloof. A man, so determined to abide by Truth, through evil report and good report, must be content to brave the pity of some, the sneers of others, and the rancorous hatred of all who live and prosper by existing error."—Thomas Cooper.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FOUNDATION.

“There is, sir, one principle necessary to make us a great people, to produce not the form but real spirit of union, and that is to protect every citizen in the lawful pursuit of his business. He will then feel that he is backed by the government; that its arm is his arm; and will rejoice in its increased strength and prosperity. Protection and patriotism are reciprocal. This is the way which has led nations to greatness. Sir, I am not versed in this calculating policy, and will not, therefore, pretend to estimate in dollars and cents the value of national independence. I cannot measure in shillings and pence the misery, the stripes, and the slavery of our impressed seamen; nor even the value of our shipping, commercial, and agricultural losses, under the orders in council and the British system of blockade. \* \* \*”<sup>1</sup>

“But we are told of the black population of the Southern States. As far as the gentleman from Virginia [John Randolph] speaks of his own personal knowledge, I shall not question the correctness of his statement. I only regret

<sup>1</sup> The Works of Calhoun, 6 Vols. D. Appleton & Co., 1853. Vol. II, p. 6.

that such is the state of apprehension in his particular part of the country. Of the Southern section I, too, have some personal knowledge, and can say that in South Carolina no such fears in any part are felt. \* \* \*"<sup>2</sup>

"The gentleman's imagination, so fruitful on this subject, conceives that our constitution is not calculated for war, and that it cannot stand its rude shock. This is rather extraordinary. If true, we must then depend upon the commiseration or contempt of other nations for our existence. The constitution, then, it seems, has failed in an essential object, 'to provide for the common defense.' No, says the gentleman from Virginia, it is competent for a defensive but not for an offensive war. It is not necessary for me to expose the error of this opinion. Why make the distinction in this instance? Will he pretend to say that this is an offensive war, a war of conquest? Yes; the gentleman has dared to make this assertion, and for reasons no less extraordinary than the assertion itself. He says our rights are violated on the ocean, and that these violations affect our shipping and commercial rights, to which the Canadas have no relation. The doctrine of retaliation has been much abused of late by an unreasonable extension; we have now to witness a new abuse. The gentleman from Virginia has limited it down to a point. By his rule, if you receive a blow on the breast,

<sup>2</sup> Works, II, p. 8.

you dare not return it on the head; you are obliged to measure and return it on the precise point on which it was received. If you do not proceed with this mathematical accuracy, it ceases to be just self-defense: it becomes an unprovoked attack. \* \* \*<sup>3</sup>

"The gentleman from Virginia is at a loss to account for what he calls our hatred to England. He asks how can we hate the country of Locke, of Newton, Hampden, and Chatham; a country having the same language and customs with ourselves, and descending from a common ancestry. Sir, the laws of human affection are steady and uniform. If we have so much to attach us to that country, potent indeed must be the cause which has overpowered it. \* \* \* But the gentleman, in his eager admiration of that country, has not been sufficiently guarded in his argument. Has he reflected on the cause of that admiration? Has he examined the reasons of our high regard for her Chatham? It is his ardent patriotism, the heroic courage of his mind, that could not brook the least insult or injury offered to his country, but thought that her interest and honor ought to be vindicated at every hazard and expense. I hope, when we are called upon to admire, we shall also be asked to imitate. I hope the gentleman does not wish a monopoly of those great virtues for England. \* \* \*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Works, II. p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Works, II, p. 11.

Such are the words that would have greeted the ear of a visitor to the halls of Congress, December 12, 1811. The visitor, if otherwise uninformed, would probably have made inquiry as to the speaker, this tall young man, whose eyes shone with such a brilliant light, and who had undertaken thus unhesitatingly to assail the great orator of Roanoke. There would doubtless have been present some accommodating person to impart the information desired (and more besides). "This is John C. Calhoun, just come up from South Carolina. He is the young man about whom there has been such a stir in that State. He has been serving in their State Legislature several years, and his action in respect to the present complications with England attracted so much attention that his district has elected him to Congress by a large majority. He is only twenty-nine years of age. He is said to be one of the coming men," etc.

The Twelfth Congress was one whose strength and talents all accounts unanimously insist upon. "Of all the Congresses with which I have had any acquaintance since my entry into the service of the Federal Government, in none, in my humble opinion, has been assembled such a galaxy of eminent and able men as were in the House of Representatives of that Congress which declared the war, and in that immediately following the peace."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> From *The Carolina Tribute to Calhoun*; edited by J. P. Thomas. R. L. Bryan, Columbia, S. C., 1857. p. 9.

\* \* \* So Henry Clay spoke of it forty years later. South Carolina loves to remember that three of her most devoted sons now simultaneously made their first entry upon the Federal stage—Langdon Cheves, William Lowndes, and John C. Calhoun.

It is a bright page of history which tells of the friendship of Lowndes and Calhoun. There is a very striking parallelism which may be traced between their careers. They were within a few days the same age. Lowndes was born in February, Calhoun in March, 1782. They represented the different types of Carolina character; either improved and elevated by the modifying influence of the other. Calhoun was the highest type of frontier rugged virility, yet tempered at the same time by the spirit of seacoast culture. Lowndes, on the other hand, was the highest type of the seacoast culture and refinement, made liberal and more robust by the quickening influence of frontier hardihood. But the most remarkable feature of this parallelism is the fact that the fathers of both of them were unalterably opposed to the adoption of the Constitution. Sturdy Patrick Calhoun apprehended it would mean relapse into "taxation without representation." Rawlins Lowndes wished no further epitaph than these words: "Here lies the man who opposed the Constitution because it was dangerous to the liberties of America." Yet, in spite of this, the sons of these two fathers



probably did as much towards strengthening and building up the struggling young nation as any others. They were both vigorous in the policy of the war, and of building up the navy, to the extent of departing radically from the precepts of their party in those particulars. In later years, when both of these statesman-friends were "spoken of" for the Presidency, the gossips looked for an interruption of their daily intercourse. They did not know the men. The two tall figures were daily seen, just as formerly, walking side by side to the Capitol.

Lowndes was prematurely snatched away, before he had time more than to commence the work of hewing out the noble career which should have been his. But, in spite of his untimely death, his name still shines undimmed, though with a placid luster, upon the page of history. It is a pleasant theme for reflection, the close mutual friendship of these two great men. Calhoun, in after years, named one of his boys "William Lowndes."

Who is there that from hearing a man speak can infer his past history and divine the formative influences which have produced his character? This were no easy task, even in the case of the veriest simpleton. But in the case of a Newton or a Calhoun, even with the book of history wide open before the eye, there is presented a problem to defy the subtlest.

The inward truth may only be approximated; but certain broad influences may be traced, upon which all can be brought to agree. The Calhouns were of that hardy race which floated with the tide of colonization from Pennsylvania and Virginia down the course of the Allegheny Mountains—"Scotch-Irish" stock they call it, whatever that may signify. The father came as a child from Donegal to Pennsylvania, thence to Virginia, thence to the home which he settled in 1756, in Abbeville District, South Carolina. The mother was born in Charlotte County, Virginia. Her maiden name was Caldwell. Of four maternal uncles, we are told, the one after whom John C. Calhoun was named was murdered in his own yard by Tories, after they had burned his house; another fell at Cowpens, with thirty saber cuts; a third lay nine months in the dungeons of St. Augustine, a prisoner of the British.\*

Of Patrick Calhoun, thrilling tales are preserved, as to bloody Indian fights, in which he proved too quick a wit and too good a shot even for those crafty antagonists. \* \* \* "Upon one occasion, he and his neighbors went down within twenty-three miles of Charleston, armed with rifles, to exercise a right of suffrage which had been disputed, a contest which ended in electing him to the Legislature

\*Gen. Edward McCrady points out to the author that this detail from the Hunter account is not historically accurate.

of the State, in which body he served for thirty years."<sup>6</sup>

Such were the hands that rocked the cradle of John C. Calhoun, in which he made his first appearance March 18, 1782. His birth was contemporaneous, one might say, with the birth of the Republic. There were other cradles rocking that same day whose pulpy burdens were destined in after times to develop into world-renowned statesmen. Daniel Webster, an infant of three months standing, sickly though he was, no doubt on that very day was deep in the mysteries of pap; Henry Clay, a boy of five, was possibly already engineering compromises with unwilling nurses; John Randolph, a bumptious lad of nine, in all probability asking hard questions of his elders, and hearing foolish answers.

Calhoun's education was wholly remarkable. "There was not an academy within fifty miles," says one account. "At the age of thirteen he was placed under the charge of his brother-in-law, Moses Waddel, a Presbyterian clergyman, in Columbia County, Georgia."<sup>7</sup> "As it happened, he had not been going to school at all, for at that period Mr. Waddel's clerical duties occupied so much of his attention that he was absent during the greater part of the time."<sup>8</sup> The lad, however, was not idle.

<sup>6</sup> From *Life of John C. Calhoun (1782-1843)*, by R. M. T. Hunter, Harper & Brothers, 1843. p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, Harpers, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Sketch by W. Pinkney Starke; in *Correspondence of John*

In fourteen weeks, it is said, he had read Rollin's Ancient History, Robertson's Charles V, and South America, and Voltaire's Charles XII, Cook's Voyages, (small vol.), Essays by Brown, and Locke's Essay as far as the chapter on Infinity. Possibly his youthful mind was fortunate in penetrating no further than stated into that abstruse work. "So intense was his application that his eyes became seriously affected, his countenance pallid, and his frame emaciated."<sup>9</sup> His mother (sensible woman) promptly took him away from books and set him to hunting and fishing, at which sports he is said to have become not a little expert. "Sawney," we learn, was his constant companion and playmate in these days. In after days, he is said constantly to have regaled enquirers with stories of these expeditions, and to have narrated with peculiar zest how "me and Marse John in the br'ilin' sun has plowed together."

No more is heard of books until five years later, when there seems to have developed a unanimous consensus of opinion that this young man should have the benefit of a higher education. John demurred at first, as he was needed by his mother (the father died some years before) to aid in managing the farm, and the family could ill afford the requisite means.

C. Calhoun, American Historical Association; edited by J. Franklin Jameson, 1900. p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> Life, Harpers, 1843, p. 5.

The accounts seem all to agree that he insisted that, if he were to have a high professional education, seven years, at least, would be necessary. This seems a very remarkable view for a lad of eighteen. Whether the account be accurate or not, the fact remains that such a period was actually devoted to his education. It is a very high tribute to the sense and generosity of his family that they should have thus insisted upon the matter of the education, and have denied themselves, as was necessary, to provide the means.

Thus young Calhoun entered upon the higher education at a period when many are about to leave it. Doubtless his mind was all the more vigorous and independent for the training it had received in Nature's school. "In this school," remarks Calhoun's most discriminating eulogist, "he learned to think, which is a vast achievement."<sup>10</sup> The academy, which had now been established by this same Dr. Waddel, near Calhoun's home, was selected for the first stage. The following picturesque account will bear quoting: "The boys boarded at farmhouses in the neighborhood or lived in log huts in the woods near the academy, furnishing their own supplies. At sunrise, Dr. Waddel was wont to wind his horn, which was immediately answered by horns from various boarding-houses in all directions. At an early hour the pupils made

<sup>10</sup> J. H. Hammond, Oration.



their appearance at the log cabin schoolhouse.

\* \* \*"<sup>11</sup>

"After prayers, the pupils, each with a chair bearing his name sculpted in the back of it, retired to the woods for study, the classes being divided into squads according to individual preference. In the spring and summer months these squads scattered through the oak and hickory woods in quest of shade, but in cold weather the first thing done by them was to kindle log-heap fires. Whosoever imagines that the boys did not study as well as they would have done under the immediate eye of the teacher is mistaken. I have been to many schools, conducted according to various systems of education, but nowhere have I seen such assiduity in study, nowhere have I ever witnessed such emulation to excel."<sup>12</sup>

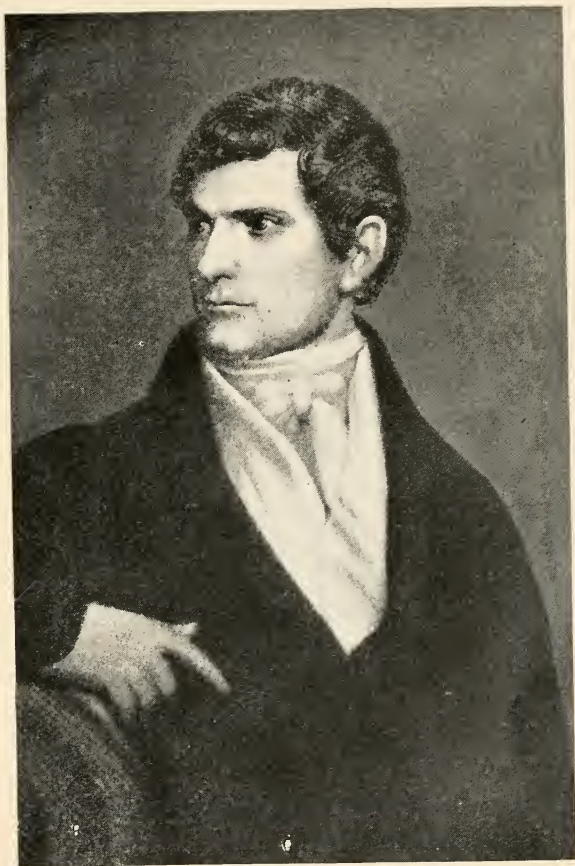
At the same time that Calhoun launched for the first time into "amo" and "penna," a batch of timorous freshmen were tapping at the doors of Yale. In two years' time, Calhoun joined those freshmen at the junior class, and two years later graduated with them, in 1804. None of the accounts fail to mention that the subject of his graduation essay was "The qualifications necessary to constitute a perfect statesman." It was an appropriate text for the life that followed. Eighteen months now at a law school in Connecticut, and

<sup>11</sup> Starke, Sketch; Correspondence, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup> Starke, Sketch; Correspondence, p. 79.

eighteen more in lawyers' offices in Charleston and Abbeville, and seed time is past, the harvest begins. Two years afterward he was sent to the State Legislature, whence, in turn, as we were informed by the obliging gossip above, he was transferred to the House of Representatives in Washington. Looking back, Calhoun at thirteen starts at books, but is choked off; five years' hunting, fishing, and farming; at eighteen, to Waddel's Academy; at twenty, to Yale; twenty-two, graduates; twenty-five, lawyer; twenty-seven, State Legislature; twenty-nine, Congress. A year before going to Congress, he was happily married to a cousin, Floride Calhoun, daughter of John Ewing Calhoun, once United States Senator from South Carolina.

Such, say the records, were the circumstances and influences which had conspired to produce the tall, slim speaker of brilliant eye and eager demeanor, whose words, as above, rang out in the Hall of Representatives, December 12, 1811. It is comparatively simple to give an account of the six years now spent in Congress. Mr. Calhoun was on the side of the majority, a majority which had in hand the business of bursting the last fetters of dependence and preparing for the youthful Hercules Republic new garments in the lieu of outgrown swaddling clouts. With all the zeal and strength of a large nature, he addressed himself to the task, and with conspicuous suc-



CALHOUN IN EARLY LIFE.



cess. To ward off danger from without; within, to point the consciousness of national pride and build up national power—this, and little besides, was his study.

The commentators who have accused Calhoun of inconsistency have not half availed themselves of the materials that obviously offer in this behalf. A very much stronger case than has been yet presented could easily be made out by the devotees to what he himself once designated "quack consistency." "Their consistency," he says, "is like that of a physician who, in the treatment of a highly inflammatory fever, would administer emetics and calomel, not only at the beginning but at every subsequent stage of the disease. It is the consistency of a quack which would be sure to kill the patient."<sup>13</sup> From time to time during these six years he advocated, with great force and ability, protective duties, internal improvements, and the latitudinarian construction of powers. All that can be said in favor of these doctrines he said, and, as usual, said rather better than anyone else. If the advocates of such doctrines would confine themselves to the arguments made in these years by Mr. Calhoun, they would stand on a much better footing than they usually occupy.

"I hope that at all times, and under every policy, they (manufacturers) will be protected with due care. \* \* \*" "In regard to the

<sup>13</sup> Works, IV, p. 268.

question, how far manufactures ought to be fostered, it is the duty of this country, as a means of defense, to encourage its domestic industry.”<sup>14</sup> “Another objection had been made which, he must acknowledge, was better founded: that capital employed in manufacturing produced a greater dependence on the part of the employed than in commerce, navigation, or agriculture. It is certainly an evil, and to be regretted; but he did not think it a decisive objection to the system, especially when it had incidental political advantages which, in his opinion, more than counterpoised it. It produced an interest strictly American, as much so as agriculture, in which it had the decided advantage of commerce or navigation. The country will from this derive much advantage. Again, it is calculated to bind together more closely our widely spread republic. It will greatly increase our mutual dependence and intercourse, and will, as a necessary consequence, excite an increased attention to internal improvements, a subject every way so intimately connected with the ultimate attainment of national strength and the perfection of our political institutions. \* \* \*”<sup>15</sup>

“I am no advocate for refined arguments on the Constitution. The instrument was not intended as a thesis for the logician to exercise his ingenuity on. It ought to be construed

<sup>14</sup> Works, II, p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> Works, II, p. 172.

with plain, good sense. \* \* \*"<sup>16</sup> "If the framers had intended to limit the use of the money to the powers afterwards enumerated and defined, nothing could have been more easy than to have expressed it plainly. \* \* \*"<sup>17</sup> This last passage occurs in an argument perhaps the strongest that has been made in favor of the power to tax for the "general welfare." The argument was made in support of the bill to set aside the bank dividends for roads and canals, the passage of which may be said to have been due to Mr. Calhoun's influence. It was vetoed by Mr. Madison as unconstitutional! There is no more significant occurrence in the early history. A traveler (especially a young one) in the tropics is not apt to concern himself greatly on the score of overcoats, even though advised by older companions that presently overcoats will be comfortable. Mr. Madison did not forget that there is an arctic region. John Randolph remembered it, and did not fail to make his remembrance known.

The constant opposition during these years between Calhoun and Randolph is as remarkable as it is picturesque. Randolph stands the great States Rights advocate of the middle ground, between Jefferson and Madison before, and Calhoun afterwards. Yet in these days Calhoun was his constant antagonist. A

<sup>16</sup> Works, II, p. 192.

<sup>17</sup> Works, II, p. 192.

few years later we find him attributing to John Randolph "wisdom worthy of a Bacon, and wit that would not discredit a Sheridan."<sup>18</sup>

Mr. Calhoun was still in the first stage of political development. It is hardly satisfactory, however, to attribute his views wholly to youth and inexperience. The eulogist before quoted remarks in this connection: "But Mr. Calhoun had no youth to our knowledge. He sprung into the arena like Minerva from the head of Jove, fully grown and clothed in armor." The times demanded the policies which he advocated, and he advocated them with all his heart and with all his strength. That growth and perfect development of political understanding which marked the after years was not yet advanced beyond the embryonic stage.

Viewed in its broadest light, there is the most perfect consistency in Calhoun's whole career. In these days, when foreign aggression was to be resisted and the *active* powers of the Union were heavily drafted on, he was an ideal progressive statesman. In later days, when domestic division and injustice was to be checked, and the *conservative* powers of the Union put to the test, he became the ideal conservative statesman. Of the first type there are multitudes of representatives, but of the latter, representatives are rare. It was in this second character that he was destined to soar

<sup>18</sup> Life, Harpers, p. 26.



on eagle wings against the very sun. The truth (and the trouble) is that many of the present day are still at the stage of development where Calhoun stood in 1811-17. Apparently it will take centuries for the multitudes, or even the leaders of the multitudes, to overtake him.

As to the tariff of 1816, which Calhoun advocated with the arguments above indicated, perhaps it is not out of place to state that it made higher rates on unprotected than on protected articles. The average of duties on all imports was about 30 per cent.; on the protected, about 20 per cent. In many arguments about this 1816 tariff it becomes interesting to omit such details.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Calhoun's Speech, Force Bill, 1833.

## CHAPTER II.

### "THEORY."

#### WAR DEPARTMENT STATISTICS.<sup>20</sup>

Year.	Total.	Cost Per Man.		Total.	Reduction.
		Articles Affected by Admin- istration.	Articles Not so Affected.		
*1816	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
*1817	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1818	\$3,702,495	\$299 64	\$151 93	\$451 57	.....
1819	3,663,735	275 98	158 72	434 70	\$16 87
1820	3,061,884	175 43	140 45	315 88	135 69
1821	2,327,552	150 40	136 62	287. 02	164 55

"This great reduction in the expenditure has been effected by the present organization, principally by the more minute control which, through it, has been given both to the disbursement of public money and the preservation of public property. Its beneficial effects have been no less striking in the prompt rendition and settlement of the accounts of disbursing officers. \* \* \*"<sup>21</sup>

"I cannot retort on the Senator the charge of being metaphysical. I cannot accuse him of possessing the powers of analysis and generalization, those higher faculties of the mind (called metaphysical by those who do not

\* Unknown.

<sup>20</sup> Works, V, p. 115 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> Works, V, p. 121.

possess them) which decompose and resolve into their elements the complex masses of ideas that exist in the world of mind, as chemistry does the bodies that surround us in the material world. \* \* \*

”<sup>22</sup> “Passing the intervening instances, I come down to my administration of the War Department, where I acted on my own judgment and responsibility. It is known to all that the department, at the time, was perfectly disorganized, with not much less than \$50,000,000 of outstanding and unsettled accounts—and the greatest confusion in every branch of service. \* \* \*

After reducing the outstanding accounts to a few millions, and introducing order and accountability in every branch of service, and bringing down the expenditure of the army from four to two-and-a-half millions annually, without subtracting a single comfort from either officer or soldier, I left the department in a condition that might well be compared to the best in any country.”<sup>23</sup>

“\* \* \* In the War Department there has been no loss in fifteen years—from 1821 to 1836—on an expenditure certainly not less than \$100,000,000. I take some pride in this result of an organization which I originated and established, when Secretary of War, against the most formidable opposition.”<sup>24</sup>

These extracts will give a glimpse into the inside workings of the War Department under

<sup>22</sup> Works, III, p. 274.

<sup>23</sup> Works, III, p. 277.

<sup>24</sup> Works, III, p. 236.

Mr. Calhoun. In 1817, upon the close of six years' service in Congress, he had been invited to take charge of this department by that wise and sturdy patriot, the last of the first great dynasty of Presidents, James Monroe. In this instance he evidently showed that solid judgment so conspicuous on many other occasions. Some of Calhoun's friends were very anxious that he should remain in Congress, as they thought the qualities of his mind preëminently fitted him for that station, and as they feared that the very brilliant reputation which was now his might suffer by the change. It is even said that William Lowndes heartily opposed his acceptance of this post. But such considerations weighed not a feather with the new nominee. Between Mr. Monroe and himself there seems to have sprung up a relation of the greatest kindliness and mutual regard. Mr. Calhoun always, throughout the subsequent years, speaks of his chief with the most genuine respect, as well on account of his immovable patriotism as of his equipoise of intellect. There were very few others of whom the like remark may be made.

The results given above better than anything else show whether or not Mr. Monroe's selection was a happy one. An idea of how those results were obtained may be formed from the following extract from a communication to one of the committees, February 12, 1822:

"They (the committee) will perceive that

these Regulations propose to carry a minute and rigid responsibility into every branch of the military disbursements, with what success a reference to the expenditures under their operation will best illustrate. The committee will perceive, by reference to the Regulations, that one principle pervades the whole organization—to hold the head of each subordinate department responsible for the disbursements of his department. All advances are made on his recommendation, founded on precise estimates; and all accounts are rendered to him and, before they are audited, are minutely examined by him and approved. It is thus that responsibility is extended to every item of disbursements, and regularity and economy introduced."<sup>25</sup> One of the points most insisted on in the reports of this period is the preservation of the supplies, medicines, and the like. Mr. Calhoun early said that to reduce the actual cash disbursements to a science was comparatively simple, but so to organize as to lose sight of none the smallest item of property was the troublesome problem. It was here that his efficient hand worked such wonderful improvement: witness the reduction in expense of these items in the above table. While expenses are thus reduced, we always find Mr. Calhoun on the side of more pay and better and more diversified rations for the men. Parsimony, he insists always, is a different

<sup>25</sup> Works, V, p. 113.

thing from economy. This feature appears very plainly when the solid affection and popularity is spoken of which was felt for him by all in the service, men and officers.

Mr. Calhoun had no small part in strengthening the foundation and enlarging the scope of the Academy at West Point. In this connection the following extracts cannot prove without interest to any American:

“\* \* \* The Military Academy has acquired a character and importance which seem not to have been contemplated in its original institution. It originated in the Act of the 16th of March, 1802, which created the corps of engineers. By that Act the President was authorized to establish a corps of engineers, to consist of one principal engineer, of the rank of major, with six assistant engineers, of the rank of captains and lieutenants, to which were added ten cadets; and the Act directed that the corps thus organized should be stationed at West Point, and should constitute a Military Academy. The principal engineer, and in his absence the next in rank, was made superintendent of the academy; and the Secretary of War was authorized to purchase such books, implements, and apparatus as should be necessary for the use of the institution. In the next year, by the Act of the 3d of February, 1803, the President was authorized to attach to the engineers two teachers, one of the French language, and the other of drawing.

The institution remained without any change in its character until 1808, when, by the Act of the 12th of April of that year, authorizing the raising of an additional military force, two cadets were attached to each company of infantry, riflemen, and artillery authorized to be raised under it; making, in the whole, with the ten cadets originally attached to the corps of engineers, one hundred and fifty cadets. The institution was further enlarged and changed in its character by the Act of the 25th of April, 1812. Three professors were then added—one of natural and experimental philosophy, another of mathematics, and the other the art of engineering in all its branches, with an assistant to each professor; and the cadets, including those that were authorized to be appointed in 1818, were increased to two hundred and fifty, without being attached to any particular corps. \* \* \*

“Under its present organization it is, in fact, as intimately connected with one corps of the army as another; yet the provision of the Act of the 16th of March, 1802, which places the superintendence of the institution under the charge of the chief of the corps of engineers, and, in his absence, the next in command, still continues. It is obvious that the organization would be more simple, and would correspond more perfectly with its present character, if the Academy were wholly separated from the engineer corps, and the President were author-

ized to select the superintendent from any corps of the army in which the most suitable character might be found. The field of selection for so important an office would thus be enlarged, and the institution be brought more directly under the control of the government.

\* \* \*

“The number of professors and assistant professors is believed to be too few for the wants of the Academy, and the two additional professors, one of chemistry and one of artillery, with the increase of the assistant professors and teachers recommended in the report of General Bernard and Colonel McRae, would greatly increase the usefulness and respectability of the Academy. The professor of chemistry might perform the duties of post surgeon, as in our country the medical profession and that of chemistry are usually united. The number of assistant professors is found to be so inadequate at present that cadets are appointed to perform the duty of assistants. The objections against the employment of cadets for that purpose contained in the report of the academic staff are deemed satisfactory.

“I entirely concur in the opinion of the superintendent of the Academy that the pay of the professors ought to be equalized, and that the compensation of the other professors ought to be made equal to that of natural and experimental philosophy, who receive the pay and emoluments of a lieutenant-colonel.



Neither the difference in the duties of the professors, nor the difference in the capacity to perform those duties, is so considerable as to justify the present difference in their pay; and less compensation than that proposed, it is believed, will not always command suitable talent. The compensation proposed in the report of the superintendent, for the teachers and assistant professors, appears to be just and proportionate to that of the professors. The pay of the superintendent of the Academy depends at present on his commission and rank; and as the most suitable officer for the post may hold an inferior rank, and as his duty and expenses as superintendent are the same, let his rank be what it may, it is conceived that it would be proper to allow the superintendent the pay and emoluments of a colonel, provided his rank does not give him a greater compensation. The present superintendent, who has performed his duties with zeal and ability, receives only the pay and emoluments of a major of engineers, and it is known that his compensation is inadequate to meet the expenses to which he is subjected, as superintendent, in a place so frequented by strangers as West Point. The additional number of professors and assistants, and the change in the compensation which has been proposed, will add something to the expenses of the institution; but the great improvement which it will make will much more than compensate the public. The pay of

superintendent and professors constitutes but a small portion of the expense of the Academy. The pay and subsistence of the cadets, the cost of buildings, fuel, stationery, books, etc., constitute the body of the expenses; yet it is manifest that these, without a suitable number of able and experienced professors, are of no avail. The annual expenses will be but little affected, whether the number and pay of the professors are adequate or inadequate; but the prosperity of the institution must necessarily depend almost wholly on their number and ability. Without a sufficient number of professors, every branch of knowledge necessary to perfect an officer to discharge his duties cannot be taught, and without a sufficient compensation, adequate talents and experience to teach that well, which may be directed to be taught, cannot be commanded. A just degree of liberality in the compensation of the superintendent, professors, and teachers, is thus necessarily connected with true economy, by rendering the other and most heavy expenses of the institution in the highest degree effective.”<sup>26</sup>

What army or navy man is there today who could read this without a ray of joy striking suddenly athwart his soul, at the mention of “increased compensation,” “entertaining money”? As was said, the chief of this department enjoyed to a very unusual extent the

<sup>26</sup> Works, V, p. 73 *et seq.*

respect and affection of soldiers, employees, and officers. We hear of the employees making addresses to him, etc. There were two removals from office of subordinates during Calhoun's eight years' administration, which is a pretty sure indication, in the first place, of how they were appointed, and in the next place, how they were treated. Those who know Calhoun only by his reputation as a statesman are apt to lose sight of the man altogether. His private letters abundantly show his easy and affectionate disposition. His blood flowed warm always. One of his friends once said that, if he could only converse with every man in the Union, not a particle of opposition to his views would remain. The devotion of the employees in this department is another phase of this side of his well-rounded and beautiful character.

As to the General Bernard referred to above, the following is recorded: “\* \* \* General Bernard, who had been a favorite aid-de-camp of the Emperor Napoleon, and saw and knew much of him, and who was chief of the board of engineers while Mr. Calhoun was secretary, and had an equal opportunity of observing him, not unfrequently, it is said, compared his (Calhoun's) administrative talents to those of that extraordinary man.”<sup>27</sup>

In these days it is said that Mr. Calhoun, next to Andrew Jackson, was the most popular

<sup>27</sup> Life, Harpers, p. 30.

man in the country, and that it was, even between those two, a close question. Accordingly, after these two terms in the War Department, he was immediately raised to the Vice-Presidency, with J. Q. Adams as President. We shall find the man presently in utterly new surroundings, everything changed but himself, from which many drew the conclusion that he had changed. On the contrary, his figure for the next twenty-five years remains the one feature in the landscape of American history always visible and always in the same position—a sort of giant Teneriffe, firm and immovable, in the midst of storm and thunder and lightning. Up to this time, success, popularity, renown, affection, had been his in great abundance. The fiery furnace lay before him.

## CHAPTER III.

REFLECTION. (VICE-PRESIDENT, 1825-32.)

In considering the career of Mr. Calhoun, one is constantly struck with the remarkable way in which all the circumstances of his life seemed to conspire to perfect him in knowledge and experience of statecraft. The character of his parents, the surroundings of his childhood, the natural bookless education of his early years, supplemented then by seven years of higher education and polish; then he was plunged into South Carolina politics at a period of more than common turmoil and contention (which to the initiated means a great deal), thence to Congress at the time of the complications with England; after that seven years at the elbow of a sturdy patriot, his right hand constantly busy in service of the greatest moment to the struggling young republic; by what process could a man at forty-three years of age stand more perfectly equipped in every respect to discharge the duties which should fall to the "ideal statesman," that kind of statesman about whom we found him above making inquiries and writing essays years before at Yale? Calhoun at forty-three had learned much, but it was characteristic of the man still to learn and grow in knowledge with

every year. His intellect was replenished as if from some fountain of perpetual youth. His mind never grew old. To this quality may be attributed his never-failing originality and, as a commentator<sup>28</sup> has observed, the fact that each speech of his, as it came out, seemed to eclipse all former efforts in interest and illuminating power.

While in the War Department he was still actively engaged in the constant routine of exacting practical duties, and occasion had never yet offered to draw out in their plentitude the marvelous analytic faculties which lay stored up within him. Even so late as 1828, four years after this, he could still write, to James Monroe, "It seems to me that we have no other check against abuses but such as grow out of responsibility, or elections, and while this is an effectual check, where the law acts equally on all, it is none in the case of the unequal action to which I refer."<sup>29</sup> Years later this was still the point of view of Webster and Clay, but he himself, who now in 1828 utters these words, was the very one who was destined to reply to those his two great compeers and antagonists, to demonstrate the inadequacy of such a check, and the superficiality of the view which could discover no other in the Constitution.

The period for observation, reflection, study, analysis, was now at hand, when Calhoun in

<sup>28</sup> J. H. Hammond.

<sup>29</sup> Correspondence, p. 266.

1825 took his seat as Vice-President. Upon his mind, as on some rich and deeply harrowed soil, experience with lavish hand scattered the seed. The seed, the soil, and every circumstance favored. The resulting growth was in proportion. Possibly no time in the early life of the Republic could be selected better to illustrate the multifarious and conflicting influences of its highly complex system of government. A cross-section of this period of history is perhaps better calculated than any other to reveal the whole anatomy of American constitutional government; each nerve and artery, bone sinew and articulation. When John Q. Adams succeeded Monroe, a new era was at hand. Discriminating historians are well agreed upon this point. Tariff, banks, spoils, the threefold manifestation of one deep-seated scrofulous affliction in the body politic, though lodged much earlier in the nation's blood, now for the first time were struck to the surface in malignant eruption. The personal character of the several leaders of the day seemed to be such as to draw out into high relief every feature of the political landscape.

Calhoun, when he took his seat as Vice-President, to use a phrase of his own, was still in the hornbook of political science. The passage from the letter to Monroe, above quoted, may serve for illustration. He was, however, at a stage of development beyond which, as was observed, even such men as Clay and

Webster years later had not progressed, and beyond which the vast majority at the present day have not yet progressed. (It looks as if they never will.) It is that stage of development which is characterized by the view that suffrage is the sole and sufficient safeguard of liberty; that, when the right to elect rulers is established, the tyranny of kings being crushed, freedom is forever guaranteed. This principle was the net result of the Revolution. This, the first lesson of political science, was then learned, and was proclaimed in such fashion that it has become indelibly stamped on the minds of posterity. Government by "consent of the governed"—so much the Revolution taught. But the learning of the first lesson so engrossed the early generations that they had little attention left for the lessons which should follow. It is a good thing to have learned. It is an invaluable possession; yet it is not of itself enough. At this stage of advancement (and not beyond it) are found nearly all the early patriots, and since that day, unnumbered judges, historians, orators, and poets (perhaps), of high authority, of unquestioned respectability. "The majority have the right to rule"—such is their dictum. It is astonishing how difficult it seems to be to advance beyond this first lesson. When the leaders find it so difficult, no wonder that the multitudes still fare mob-like on and flounder heavily in countless bogs.



Of the founders of the Republic, Jefferson and Madison seem alone to have progressed beyond the first lesson. John Randolph, of Roanoke, after them, likewise progressed. That Calhoun, with these examples immediately before him, did not earlier progress is matter of great significance.

Sedate as is the Presidency of the Senate, while Calhoun occupied the chair, he was destined to experience many a storm. Early in his first term came Randolph's heavy cannonade against the administration, which terminated in the immortal epigram: "I was defeated, horse, foot, and dragoons—cut up and clean broke down by the coalition of Blifil and Black George—by the combination, unheard of till then, of the puritan with the blackleg."<sup>30</sup> This was more than flesh and blood could endure. "Black George" called Randolph out. "Blifil" quoted Ovid.

Calhoun had refused to call Randolph to order, on the ground that the right to call to order rested with Senators. This brought down the wrath of the President upon his head in a bitter attack.

From Randolph it is safe to say that Calhoun learned much in these days. Randolph understood things. He understood, for instance, the tariff humbug. As early as 1824 he had said in this connection: "This is not the last tariff measure; for, in less than five

<sup>30</sup> The Life of John Randolph, of Roanoke, by Hugh A. Garland. D. Appleton & Co., 1853. p. 254.

years, I would, if I were a betting man, wager any odds that we have another tariff proposition, worse by far than that, amendments to which gentlemen had strangled yesterday by the bow-string of the previous question. \* \* \* When I recollect that the tariff of 1816 was followed by that of 1819-20, and that by this measure of 1823-24, I cannot believe that we are at any time long to be exempt from the demands of those sturdy beggars, who will take no denial. Every concession does but render every fresh demand and new concession more easy. It is like those dastard nations who think to buy peace."<sup>31</sup>

Randolph's inimitable ridicule of bank-paper was doubtless illuminating, and gave to Calhoun the keynote.

In 1830 occurred the Webster-Hayne debate.

Steadily increasing tariff, rising floods of bank-paper, the war debt paid, the treasury plethoric, the spoils doctrine rapidly developing, such were the features of this era of eight years while Calhoun presided over the Senate. He watched, listened, reflected, analyzed, probed to the bottom each governmental problem, until he had mastered his subject as no other American before him, and none since.

In 1830 occurred the historic breach with President Jackson. The official records reveal as the cause Calhoun's action (twelve years before) in Monroe's Cabinet upon the occasion

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

of the Seminole War; but, *cherchez la femme*, says tradition. The Calhouns, it seems, refused social recognition to a Mrs. Eaton, whom the Chief Executive favored, but towards whom history, contemporary and subsequent, is disposed to be severe. *Hinc illae lachrymae*. The effort at heroics on the part of "Old Hickory," the piteous plaint of "friends remembered not" and "benefits forgot," at this distance appears no less than ridiculous. It was serious then. It must have cost Mr. Calhoun some pains to expose, as he did, the hopeless jumble of facts and the violence to historical sequence into which the President had been betrayed.

This and other causes brought Mr. Calhoun into irreconcilable conflict with the administration. Malice, slander, and all uncharitableness, were henceforth showered on him in ever-increasing torrents. Accusations of desertion, inconsistency, disappointed ambition, and those noxious vapors emitted in all ages from the morasses of politics, constantly attended him. He once said himself, "He who acts honestly seems to be the greatest deceiver."<sup>32</sup> Here is a master-key to his career. Whoso possesses it understands readily the whole or any part.

It is important to remember, in respect to this period, that when the tariff Act of 1828—"the bill of abominations"—was on passage, appearances indicated that there would be a

<sup>32</sup> Correspondence, p. 232.

tie in the Senate, and that the casting vote would thus fall to the Vice-President. Some of Mr. Calhoun's political adherents exhorted him to remain away from the chair, which, it seems, was by no means so unusual a practice as to excite any especial comment; for, by voting against the measure, he would bring down the displeasure of the manufacturers and all the influences that had conspired to concoct it, and thus greatly injure his prospects. Be it remembered that at this time (the breach with Jackson had not occurred—Jackson was not yet President) Mr. Calhoun stood second to none but Jackson in point of popularity throughout the country, in addition to the distinction that had been earned by his talents and services. The Presidency was fairly waiting to drop into his lap. Those who possess the master-key are assured without the telling what course he pursued. He insisted on taking his place in the chair as usual. Not only this: outside of Congress, he took an open and decided stand against that measure, thus incurring the full tide of popular displeasure, and completely shutting out the brilliant prospects before him for advancement to the Presidency. All of which is important only in the light of after events, and then only to those who do not understand the character of the man. Those who do find "explanation" of any sort superfluous, if not offensive.

The next capacity in which Mr. Calhoun

was to serve was that of specially chosen Senator of the sovereign State of South Carolina. We shall then have to search for him upon the mountain tops. It requires some effort to rise to the proper height. Down in the plains, or lost in intervening hollows and thickly wooded ridges, it is impossible to see the view. He proclaims in no uncertain tone the objects that greet his vision; behind, deep-buried in the past; before, far-stretching in the future. The prospects comprises many ages and many nations. The mountain eminence is hard to gain. The view is well worth while.

## CHAPTER IV.

### NULLIFICATION.

Contemporaries bear witness that Mr. Calhoun himself felt that if the after times should take note of him, it would be principally on the score of Nullification. He wished, we are told, to be known as a "nullifier." Here is a hint. An utterance like this holds peculiar significance when it comes from one "with such large discourse, looking before and after"—seeing the centuries past and to come, as it has been given to few others to see. It denotes an event deserving the utmost consideration, the closest scrutiny. Nullification, he thought, would be preserved to memory when tariff, banks, and the like, were swallowed up in oblivion, and the sons of men looking around on strangely altered prospects. Part of his expectation is already realized, for it has come to pass that he is known as "The Great Nullifier," however little the term as yet may be truly comprehended.

It is characteristic of errant humanity to employ words and yet to lack the proper understanding of them. Whence the Frenchman laughs in his sleeve, "*La parole a été donnée à l'homme pour déguiser sa pensée.*" The word

"principle" has thus been greatly maltreated. "The principle of the thing" is often insisted upon. The "principles" of science, the "principles" of nature, the "principles" of morals, etc., such are some of the many services exacted from this much overworked vocable. But what is a principle? Who will say? Why did we throw tea overboard, which was a violent act, and launch unnumbered oaths and epithets at royalty, obese and bovine? The virtuous first readers impart, "It was for principle"; and so it was. It would appear that throwing tea over was principle, because the tax on tea was one of a class of taxes; that class of taxes in turn was one of a wider class of oppressive measures; and all these successive classes taken together cover the whole range of tyranny. The specific tea-throwing, therefore, in that it resisted a part of tyranny, resisted the whole of tyranny. If the resistance proved successful, not only would the burden of tea-tax be removed, but the burden of all taxes whatsoever, laid without representation. The small matter of tea at one end of the chain was coupled up, in other words, by a series of unbroken links with the extremely large matter of liberty at the other. Not the inconsiderable interests of a few for a short time, but the incalculable interests of great numbers for unknown time, were directly implicated. Hence it seems proper to unite with the first readers in saying that the act was important

because of the "principle." But it is arguable whether further significance may be discovered in that mystic word than is here indicated.

Knowledge is valuable in proportion as it is general. The knowledge that Plato ate a peach on such and such a day amounts to little. But the knowledge that Plato's teachings have dominated the minds of millions and directed the trend of whole centuries of thought is accorded greater dignity. In proportion as a discovery embraces a wide field of facts and explains a large number of occurrences, just in such proportion is it important and valuable.

"The Senator from Delaware (Mr. Clayton) calls this metaphysical reasoning, which he says he cannot comprehend. If by metaphysics he means that scholastic refinement which makes distinctions without difference, no one can hold it in more utter contempt than I do; but if, on the contrary, he means the power of analysis and combination—that power which reduces the most complex idea into its elements, which traces causes to their first principle, and, by the power of generalization and combination, unites the whole in one harmonious system—then, so far from deserving contempt, it is the highest attribute of the human mind. It is the power which raises man above the brute, which distinguishes his faculties from mere sagacity, which he holds in common with inferior animals. It is this power which has raised the astronomer



from being a mere gazer at the stars to the high intellectual eminence of a Newton or a Laplace, and astronomy itself from a mere observation of insulated facts into that noble science which displays to our admiration the system of the universe. And shall this high power of the mind, which has effected such wonders when directed to the laws which control the material world, be forever prohibited, under a senseless cry of metaphysics, from being applied to the high purpose of political science and legislation? I hold them to be subject to laws as fixed as matter itself, and to be as fit a subject for the application of the highest intellectual power. Denunciation may, indeed, fall upon the philosophical inquirer into these first principles, as it did upon Galileo and Bacon when they first unfolded the great discoveries which have immortalized their names; but the time will come when truth will prevail in spite of prejudice and denunciation, and when politics and legislation will be considered as much a science as astronomy and chemistry." <sup>33</sup>

Newton, if those first readers are to be credited, saw an apple fall. Gravity was revealed. Calhoun saw South Carolina falling from the stable equilibrium of liberty. Political gravity was recognized. There is a striking parallelism between the two cases, which may be carried far without doing violence to the meta-

<sup>33</sup> Works, II, p. 232.

phor. One has application no less wide than space. The other applies to all the nations in all the ages. The balance of the stars strikes admiration dumb. To balance the nations, though an humbler, is yet a mighty task. It still is not beyond the reach of human hands. Surely this, if anything, merits attention and endeavor. Inertia urges the planets forward; attraction holds them in their orbits. So power must be given to governments, but liberty must not be taken from the people. Force centrifugal and centripetal must be set against each other, else wrack and ruin follow. Gravity remained undiscovered for many ages, for all the carpenters and masons. Many peoples, blindly and by accident, have availed themselves of political gravity: witness Rome and England. In America for the first time was it laid bare and openly proclaimed.

"Consent of the governed," grievously and slow worked out at Valley Forge and elsewhere, rests for its significance on political gravity. The Revolution discovered part of the superstructure of liberty. The foundation lay hidden from sight until Nullification. Political gravity is self-interest. If unchecked, large will oppress small, many few, despots subjects, majorities minorities, the governing the governed. This last fact the Revolutionists appreciated. "Divine Rights" and the like were thrown out on the dust heap. The people were pronounced sovereign. But, just as irre-

sponsible rulers will oppress the ruled, just so, and for the same reason, will the major part of society oppress the minor. To secure suffrage is to guarantee responsibility in the law-maker as against those who elected him, but it is no guarantee to those who did not. Consent of the governed is a great fundamental doctrine, but it must be understood that the consent of all the governed is intended. Suffrage secures the consent of only a part of the governed.

"There would appear, indeed, a feebleness in our intellectual powers on political subjects when directed to large masses. We readily see why a single individual, as a ruler, would, if not prevented, oppress the rest of the community; but are at a loss to understand why seven millions would, if not also prevented, oppress six millions, as if the relative numbers on either side could in the least degree vary the principle."<sup>34</sup>

"Two powers are necessary to the existence and preservation of free States: a power on the part of the ruled to prevent rulers from abusing their authority, by compelling them to be faithful to their constituents, and which is effected through the right of suffrage; and a power *to compel the parts of society to be just to one another, by compelling them to consult the interest of each other*, which can only be effected, whatever may be the device for the

<sup>34</sup> Works, VI, p. 191.

purpose, by requiring the concurring assent of all the great and distinct interests of the community to the measures of the government. This result is the sum total of all the contrivances adopted by free States to preserve their liberty, by preventing the conflicts between the several classes or parts of the community. Both powers are indispensable, the one as much so as the other."<sup>25</sup>\*

(1) By Suffrage, oppression by rulers is prevented.

(2) By Nullification, oppression by majorities is prevented.

The Revolution explained the first proposition. The Revolution gave one leg to liberty. Nullification is needed to supply the other. Self-interest will surely topple over liberty of the one-legged variety.

If what is here asserted can be maintained, plainly it is matter of no little consequence. It should be remembered that whether the right of Nullification is given by the American Constitution is an entirely different question from

<sup>25</sup> Works, VI, p. 189.

\*With this compare the 51st Number of the Federalist, quoted in the South Carolina Exposition as coming from Hamilton, but by others attributed to Madison. The passages quoted in the Exposition are as follows:

"It is of great importance in a republic not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part. Different interests necessarily exist in different classes of citizens. If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure." Federalist, p. 292, and again, at p. 293:

"In a society, under the forms of which the stronger faction can readily unite and oppress the weaker, anarchy may as truly be said to reign as in a state of nature where the weaker individual is not secured against the violence of the stronger."

the question whether such a right is requisite to liberty. Great interest may attach to the first as a matter of history, but infinitely more important and absorbing is the second. The whole of history may be wiped from the slate with a wet sponge, but the momentous significance of the matter remains not one whit diminished. Here is another of those unbroken chains, with an apparently unimportant matter at one end indissolubly linked with matter at the other of world-wide importance. The contention is that the absence from the structure of government of some such balance will with the utmost certainty occasion a series of disasters—party strife, spoils, corruption, loss of patriotism, substitution of party zeal, disorder, conflict, and finally military despotism. On the other hand, if this conservative force is present, the series will be moderation, harmony, constant improvement—mental and moral—in occupants of public office, fervid patriotism, power and glory abroad, true prosperity, peace, and liberty at home. If this contention strike anywhere near the truth, then an investigation is as timely now as it was in 1833. The subject will remain as fresh and unexhausted five hundred years hence as it is today. Greater moment can no inquiry possess. Yet, great as it is, it is no greater than the difficulty of attracting attention to it.

Calhoun did all that he could in this behalf. For twenty years he devoted his transcendent

talent to it. He viewed the matter, with extraordinary versatility, in a thousand different lights; he expounded, elucidated, demonstrated, it past controversy. He entered an explanation of it on the record of American history that (one would think) the blind could hardly fail to see. Yet, for a spell, lethal apathy befores the vision of mankind; they bungle and stumble grievously along the same old road, devious, rocky, overgrown with brambles; where the least attention would insure a broad highway, commodious and straight and ever improving with increase of travel.

The imperviousness of mankind to an idea is no less than wonderful. There seems to be an instinctive antipathy to truth. Columbus said the world was round. He and others (by sailing around it) proceeded to substantiate the contention. Here was an argument, one would suppose, of no little cogency; but the advocates of the flat theory put old Christopher in jail. Today there are few who dispute the round theory. There has never been a better instance of this imperviousness than the case in hand. Even in America, where from the first everyone has been on notice that a great political experiment was trying, where an extraordinary amount of attention has been devoted to government and Constitution, where, if anywhere, one would have looked for that eternal vigilance which, we are told, is the price of liberty;

even here blindness, apathy, stolid indifference, is encountered on every side. It would not have been thus could the shades of the delegates of 1788 have been called from their tombs and convened to hear the words of Calhoun as he addressed the Senate in 1833. All the difficulties which they had groped after and struggled with in darkness and uncertainty, before the fact, had now, by fifty precious years of time, been tested, revealed, declared. Thus Calhoun had the incalculable advantage over his predecessors of making up judgment after, instead of before, the fact. Could an assembly such as that supposed have been convoked, a few hours would have arranged the Constitution, so as far to surpass any expectations ever entertained for it by the most sanguine of the Revolutionary patriots. The heaviest care of the convention seems to have been to provide against the disruptive tendency of a State. The very opposite tendency time revealed to be the real danger.

Practical instances of the beneficent influence of check, veto, or nullification, are not few nor hard to find in history. Mr. Calhoun makes the point that the governments of Europe as a class were federative, whereas those of Asia were of the absolute character. Thus, he thinks, Plataea and Marathon take on a new significance, as the triumph of limited over absolute government, and the determination of the preëminence of Europe over Asia, freedom



over despotism. Rome, he points out, fell into great disorder, until Patrician and Plebeian struck a compromise. Tribunes of the people were then provided, who had a veto on the execution as well as the passage of the laws. Under this arrangement (the superficial call it anarchy) Rome stamped her name upon the earth, so that no future generation could fail to read it. In England, three estates, King, Nobility, and People, each have a check on the other. Moreover, their constitution is such that to increase the revenue is to increase the conservative influence of the government. But most remarkable instance of all, for Americans at least, is the adoption of their own constitution. From the very outset all realized that the veto of one State was sufficient to discard a suggestion. No provision could stand a chance for adoption which did not meet the approval and secure the vote of each State. Here was the dominant influence which guided the deliberations. Who does not see that this beneficent force was calculated to prune away every superfluous suggestion, every irrelevance, every paragraph and section which was not directed to the common welfare? It is very strange that no one besides Mr. Calhoun seems ever to have insisted upon this view. That accurate and scientific observer, Mr. Bryce, overlooks it wholly. In searching for the causes of the excellence of the Constitution, he enumerates many others, but this, the cen-



tral and most important of all, he wholly omits. The movement of the ship of state is the resultant of many opposing forces. Only when the divergent interests of the several constituent portions are balanced against each other will the ship move along the line of the general welfare. The Constitution was such a resultant. It was the unanimous verdict of thirteen jurymen States. Mr. Calhoun also points to the jury as a notable instance of the merit of the veto power. Why, in the matter of life and liberty, is the *unanimous* voice of twelve demanded? The two instances, in themselves, would seem to answer all objections. If the principle of veto be anarchical, then the Constitution of the United States resulted from an assembly presided over by the spirit of anarchy, and the same spirit presides wherever the life or liberty of an Anglo-Saxon is in jeopardy.

Such is the nature in general of the conservative force in government. Whether such a power exists under the American Constitution was the question at issue in 1833. Even if it was conclusively established at that time that it does not so exist, the question remains open whether it ought to exist. There are those who refuse to consider the question. They are minded to put it away. They pronounce the words "academic discussion," and so resolutely place themselves beyond the pale or possibility of reason. "Academic discus-

sion" indeed! The discussion on which inevitably depends the liberty of Americans, implicating in its consequences no less important practical affairs than the education of children, the growth of literature, the progress of the arts and sciences; the discussion whether there shall be peace and harmony and progress, and Americans shall dwell together in unity in the mansion builded by the patriot fathers; or, whether there shall be discord, strife, corruption, dictators, despotism, bayonets and bullets! Yes, it is a discussion involving, save the mark, consequences of dollars and cents! Is not the business of throat-cutting expensive, especially when it is all in the family? Such are the consequences to be shaped according as this "academic discussion" is determined one way or the other.

The matter of tea and liberty above referred to may now again be called up to advantage. This time it is tariff and liberty. In 1816, we saw Calhoun advocating the tariff without reservation. It was in reality a revenue measure. It afforded incidental protection. The metamorphosis of a revenue into a protective tariff is more natural and easy than any sung by Ovid. In 1820, the "sturdy beggars," referred to by Randolph, were eager and hungry at the doors of Congress. Result, more tariff. In 1824, ditto, ditto. In 1828, ditto, ditto. Here was a twelve-year crescendo of tariff. Protection, at first blinked at and sidled in,

gradually grows, until it is in possession of the whole ground. People had more sense in those days, and conditions were simpler. The Southern Exporting States, the "Staple States," saw what was going on, and seeing, wonderful occurrence, understood! South Carolina, in particular, saw with the keenest vision. They objected, they petitioned, they memorialized, they protested. Result, more tariff. The well-named "Bill of Abominations" (1828) imposed duties amounting to one-half the value of all imports. It amounted to the confiscation of a large proportion of the annual produce of the staple States. Under these circumstances, South Carolina, led by Calhoun, prepared and presented the celebrated Exposition and Protest, wherein she held up for the first time the shield of her sovereignty, and indicated that, if not relieved, she would, however reluctantly, make use of it.

Tariff for protection, said South Carolina, is unconstitutional. It is beyond the powers granted to Congress. If this power be yielded; moreover, if the right of deciding whether or not the power is constitutional, be yielded, then must all power be yielded, and the sovereignty of the commonwealth entirely absorbed. We, by the Constitution, granted certain powers to Congress; we claim the right to declare what was then actually granted and what was not; if any other tribunal than that which made the grant is accorded authority, in case of dispute,

to determine the limits of the grant, then must the sovereignty which we claim forever vanish.

Thus the issue was much broader than any mere tariff schedule. The great issue was directly involved, whether the people of South Carolina still constituted a constitution-making body, or were degraded to the dependent condition of a mere county or corporation. As to the issues involved, and their connection, there is the most perfect parallelism between 1833 and 1861. In 1833 the special question was tariff, which by necessary implication involved sovereignty and local self-government. In 1861 the special question was domestic slavery, similarly involving the same wider issue. In 1833 civil war was narrowly averted. Had the temper of opposing parties been as bloody as in 1861, it might then have been precipitated; and, had that occurred, no historian would have been troubled with the question whether slavery caused the war.

Four years elapsed from the time of the Exposition before things came to a head. It is essential to a correct understanding of subsequent events to note that South Carolina, at the same time that she was declaring this doctrine, was supporting the candidacy of General Jackson. She helped to elect him, hoping for relief from that change; but after Jackson was elected, the policy against which South Carolina had thus vigorously protested not only was not amended but was reenacted and de-

clared to be perpetual. If, as Jackson afterwards proclaimed, the doctrine and measures of South Carolina were treasonable, the time for him to say so was before, not after, receiving her vote. His lack of education must be invoked to save his consistency.

The policy of 1828 was confirmed and declared permanent in 1832, and then South Carolina raised high her shield, and made a final stand upon her sovereignty. Jackson's proclamation was issued. Robert Y. Hayne, whose ingenuous, buoyant disposition made him the darling of his people, had been recalled from the Senate to take charge of the State as Governor, and Calhoun resigned the Vice-Presidency and was substituted in Hayne's seat. Under such circumstances, amidst the breathless suspense of the whole country, Congress convened, and Calhoun took his place in the Senate, the place he was to occupy almost without interruption to the day of his death, and the place with which he is most often associated. It was perhaps the place most appropriate to him. There had been wild talk of his arrest upon arrival in Washington.

The vulgar, very vulgar, idea is that Calhoun and his State rebelled against the national government, and were cowed into submission by the dreadful Jackson. The idea is simply ridiculous. It merits no consideration whatever. The dispute, by the masterly tact of Clay and his great influence, was compromised, but

the compromise surrendered all that South Carolina contended for. It virtually surrendered the right of "protection," and a diminishing scale of duties was provided, under which, in the course of ten years, the duties were to be reduced to the needs of the government, economically administered. He is very untrue to the traditions of his State who would feel any disposition to boast offensively of her triumph in this contest. Proud of her he cannot but feel, but his pride has the solid foundation to rest upon, that she stood for justice and the Constitution, for the safety of the Union and liberty. Regard for the Union, no less than reverential, always characterized the leaders of the State, but all regard was deemed spurious and ill considered which did not at the same time harmonize with self-respect and a correct estimation of her own rights.

Calhoun's speech on the "Force Bill," in February, 1833, is probably the greatest of his career. The issues then involved are the largest and most important that can engage the attention of mankind. The effort is worthy of the occasion. Here may be found the substance of what is his peculiar contribution to the science of government. If mankind had no other foundation on which to rear up liberty, here is to be found foundation broad enough. His eloquence on this occasion is of the very highest order, eloquence drawn from the depths of a deep and noble nature.

“\* \* \* It has been said that the bill declares war against South Carolina. No. It decrees a massacre of her citizens! War has something ennobling about it, and, with all its horrors, brings into action the highest qualities, intellectual and moral. It was, perhaps, in the order of Providence that it should be permitted for that very purpose. But this bill declares no war, except, indeed, it be that which savages wage—a war, not against the community, but the citizens of whom that community is composed. But I regard it as worse than *savage* warfare—as an attempt to take away life under the color of law, without the trial by jury, or any other safeguard which the Constitution has thrown around the life of the citizen! It authorizes the President, or even his deputies, when they may suppose the law to be violated, without the intervention of a court or jury, to kill without mercy or discrimination!

“It has been said by the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. Grundy) to be a measure of peace! Yes; such peace as the wolf gives to the lamb, the kite to the dove! Such peace as Russia gives to Poland, or death to its victim! A peace, by extinguishing the political existence of the State, by awing her into an abandonment of the exercise of every power which constitutes her a sovereign community. It is to South Carolina a question of self-preservation; and I proclaim it that, should this bill pass,



and an attempt be made to enforce it, it will be resisted, at every hazard—even that of death itself. Death is not the greatest calamity: there are others still more terrible to the free and brave, and among them may be placed the loss of liberty and honor. There are thousands of her brave sons who, if need be, are prepared cheerfully to lay down their lives in defense of the State, and the great principles of constitutional liberty for which she is contending. God forbid that this should become a necessity! It never can be, unless this government is resolved to bring the question to extremity, when her gallant sons will stand prepared to perform the last duty—to die nobly.”<sup>36</sup>

“It is said that the bill ought to pass, because the law must be enforced. The law must be enforced! The imperial edict must be executed! It is under such sophistry, couched in general terms, without looking to the limitations which must ever exist in the practical exercise of power, that the most cruel and despotic acts ever have been covered. It was such sophistry as this that cast Daniel into the lion’s den, and the three innocents into the fiery furnace. Under the same sophistry, the bloody edicts of Nero and Caligula were executed. The law must be enforced. Yes; the act imposing the ‘tea tax must be executed.’ This was the very argument which impelled

<sup>36</sup> Works, II, p. 229.



Lord North and his administration to that mad career which forever separated us from the British crown. Under a similar sophistry, 'that religion must be protected,' how many massacres have been perpetrated? and how many martyrs have been tied to the stake? What! acting on this vague abstraction, are you prepared to enforce a law without considering whether it be just or unjust, constitutional or unconstitutional? Will you collect money when it is acknowledged that it is not wanted? He who earns the money, who digs it from the earth with the sweat of his brow, has a just title to it against the universe. No one has a right to touch it without his consent except his government, and this only to the extent of its legitimate wants; to take more is robbery, and you propose by this bill to enforce robbery by murder. Yes; to this result you must come, by this miserable sophistry, this vague abstraction of enforcing the law, without a regard to the fact whether the law be just or unjust, constitutional or unconstitutional.

"In the same spirit, we are told that the Union must be preserved, without regard to the means. And how is it proposed to preserve the Union? By force! Does any man in his senses believe that this beautiful structure—this harmonious aggregate of States, produced by the joint consent of all—can be preserved by force? Its very introduction will

be certain destruction to this Federal Union. No; no. You cannot keep the States united in their constitutional and federal bonds by force. Force may, indeed, hold the parts together, but such union would be the bond between master and slave—a union of exaction on one side and of unqualified *obedience* on the other. That *obedience* which, we are told by the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Wilkins), is the Union! Yes; exaction on the side of the master; for this very bill is intended to collect what can be no longer called taxes—the voluntary contribution of a free people—but tribute—tribute to be collected under the mouths of the cannon! Your custom-house is already transferred to a garrison, and that garrison with its batteries turned, not against the enemy of your country, but on subjects (I will not say citizens) on whom you propose to levy contributions. Has reason fled from our borders? Have we ceased to reflect? It is madness to suppose that the Union can be preserved by force. I tell you plainly that the bill, should it pass, cannot be enforced. It will prove only a blot upon your statute book, a reproach to the year, and a disgrace to the American Senate. I repeat it will not be executed. \* \* \*<sup>37</sup>

“I consider the bill\* as far worse, and more dangerous to liberty, than the tariff. It has been most wantonly passed, when its avowed

<sup>37</sup> Works, II, p. 233.

\*Force Bill.

object no longer justified it. I consider it as chains forged and fitted to the limbs of the States, and hung up to be used when occasion may require. We are told in order to justify the passage of this fatal measure, that it was necessary to present the olive branch with one hand and the sword with the other. We scorn the alternative. You have no right to present the sword. The Constitution never put the instrument in your hands to be employed against a State; and as to the olive branch, whether we receive it or not will not depend on your menace but on our own estimate of what is due to ourselves and the rest of the community in reference to the difficult subject on which we have taken issue."<sup>38</sup>

Nullification forms the pivot of this whole period of American history. It completely turned the trend of the current of affairs. Tariffs, banks, spoils, were shaken to their very center. It stayed the march of consolidation until the madness of the Mexican War and its sequelæ swept everything before it.

Mr. Calhoun was unfaltering and emphatic in his assertion that Nullification was a "peaceful remedy." It seems impossible to deny that the event justified the assertion. It did remedy the evil existing, and, although it went to the verge of civil war, civil war was averted.

"Such," he says (meaning war), "would be the certain effect of secession; and if Nullifica-

<sup>38</sup> Works, II, p. 307.

tion be secession—if it be but a different name for the same thing—such, too, must be its effect.”<sup>39</sup> He then goes on to show the difference between the two. It will be seen that he maintained that Nullification was peaceful, but that secession would surely be followed by war. How well founded both predictions were we now have history to show.

It is sometimes maintained that argument is unprofitable and endless. It is only so where disputants are irrational. Whether Nullification is a right reserved under the American Constitution is a dispute which with a little care may be finally disposed of in comparatively brief compass. Webster himself admitted that if the Constitution is truly a compact of sovereign States, Nullification and all the rest followed as a necessary corollary. He argued against Calhoun that it is not such a compact.\* Calhoun answered the argument. Reply to that answer was never made by Webster, nor ever will, nor ever can, be made by anyone. Nevertheless, to those who are disposed to argue still, a few issues, simply framed, may be presented: 1. Is it proper to take a distinction between law-making and constitution-making power? 2. If it is, where, in the United States, does the constitution-making power reside? 3. Where, under the American system, does the right of eminent

<sup>39</sup> Works, VI, p. 167.

\*See Appendix A.

domain reside? 4. Are the States, then, sovereign? 5. Did they divide powers, granting part specifically to the Federal Government, and reserving the rest to themselves? 6. Did they, in granting powers, part with the right of saying what they then intended to grant; did they part with this right in favor of any tribunal at any time; and, if they did, when, to whom, and by what instrument? 7. Can they part with this power without ceasing to be sovereign? Madison's argument answered these questions, and is reënforced by the argument of Jefferson. Calhoun has recast, filled out, completed the whole. There has been no answer; there can be none.

Some think that the Civil War settled all these questions. It settled not one—any more than a head-end collision settles the question how to build boilers, or what kind of fuel to put into them. The question is as open as it ever was. It will remain open until it is settled right. Without Nullification, or its equivalent, there can be no liberty. Without liberty there can be no peace.

Nullification is an indispensable police force for the arrest of disorderly statutes. To object to nullification, that it is anarchical, because it would disturb just laws, is just as reasonable as it would be to abolish municipal police for fear they would arrest orderly citizens. Only to tyrants is nullification anarchy. To them it is hateful anarchy, because it disturbs the

law which is their will. Without nullification there will be increase of disorderly statutes, of subservient statute-makers, of tyrannical statute-enforcers.

If nullification is a doubtful right, a constitutional convention should be at once called, for the express purpose of rendering it certain.

## CHAPTER V.

### TARIFF.

For the next ten years (1833-43) Mr. Calhoun was uninterruptedly in the Senate. Even if his career had come to a close immediately after his speech on the Force Bill, he would have left behind him abundant sign posts to guide the future generations. He had delved to the very bottom of the problem of government and had mastered all the elements. He was in possession of the priceless legacy of Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson, rendered still more precious now in the light of fifty years of experience. He understood the philosophy of politics as none before and none after him have understood it, and already in 1833 he had entered the principal results on the record. But almost twenty years still remained to him in which to serve his country and mankind. His speeches of this period are heavy with the fruit of wisdom. If only his counsels had prevailed, what an American Union were here! The American people are a full century behind their history.

The speeches of that period throw a flood of light on all the leading questions of the day—tariff, finance, public domain, and abolitionism.

A sketch has been given of nullification ; it may not now prove unprofitable to give some account of his views on the several other matters mentioned. Those deserving most attention at the present day, as bearing directly on current issues, are what above were accounted the threefold manifestation of national scrofula—tariff, banks, and spoils. The body politic to-day is full of sores and symptoms characteristic of all three.

There is much in some names. The word “protection,” for instance, almost without assistance, has accomplished results little short of miraculous. From 1789 to 1861 (some one has calculated it) that word took \$2,770,000,000 from Southern pockets. From 1861 to date, as is the phrase of accountants, it has probably taken at least as much again, which, with interest, to resort once more to the habit of accountants, would build several miles of railroad. There is much truth in the witty assertion that American politics consist of raising and lowering the tariff (that is, if the words “and lowering” be first stricken out). More than eighty years has this issue been before the American people. Seventy years since, South Carolina, led by Calhoun, explained and exposed the whole thing. Nullification, it is true, brought the system to the earth : “The protective system, which has been the cause of all the mischief, has fallen prostrate before it in the dust. He who undertakes



to revive its putrid carcass will perish in the attempt" (1839).<sup>40</sup> The "carcass," however, by some means (not miraculous) got itself resurrected, and abides with us to this hour, a living leper.

The protective system may be regarded as the last remnant of the medieval and long since exploded "mercantile theory," which made gold and silver the *summum bonum* of economics; restrictions on imports means necessarily influx of specie.

Protection is fully considered by Mr. Calhoun in all its principal bearings.

A. Effects on the Wealth of the Country as a Whole.

Protection actually causes a loss in aggregate wealth. He who produces a protected article, by supposition, would make no profit without the duty. The difference between the profit on the protected article and the amount of the duty is the least that this loss can amount to. (The case supposed is one where the duty is not prohibitory.) Suppose A produces an article at a cost of 50 cents. The same article sells under free competition at 40 cents. A duty of 50 per cent. is laid. The price will then be 60 cents. The amount lost to the community would be at least 10 cents. Calhoun estimates in 1828 that this amount would be fully 30 per cent. of the value of the articles demanding protection. Be it remem-

<sup>40</sup> Works, III, p. 381.

bered that this is not merely giving to one what has been taken from another—it is decreeing by law the waste of so much actual wealth; it is, as Mr. Mill has since observed, the same thing as digging a hole and burying so much gold in it.

B. Effects on the South. The South exports say two-thirds of all exports. She pays, therefore, two-thirds of the duties, although containing one-third of the population. It is a mistake to say the “consumer pays,” and therefore that the North pays in proportion to population. For imports and exports must balance. Our two-thirds of the exports pay for two-thirds of the imports. To pay for the remaining one-third of the imports exhausts your one-third of the exports. Therefore, the means of paying for what more than one-third of the imports you consume must be drawn from our two-thirds. In other words, we pay not only two-thirds of the revenue, but we also furnish you with the means of purchasing all that you consume in excess of the one-third of the imports for which your own exports pay. The way in which this is accomplished is by a forced purchase by us from you at advanced prices of the articles which formerly we purchased abroad at open market prices. Of our wealth, part goes into the treasury, part goes into your pockets, and part (as above shown) is lost to society. The outcome of the system, as described by a brilliant and ethereal

young Carolinian, prematurely snatched away, Warren R. Davis, is, for the South, "Robinson Crusoe and a goat-skin."\*

C. Effects on the North. One effect, in addition to those already incidentally described, is the crippling of navigation. Massachusetts and Webster were very explicit on this point in 1820, when they resolved the tariff a very bad thing, in which they were correct. But one of the worst effects to the North is that the system necessarily cripples her best natural customer, the South. It also renders the North unable to compete for the world market for the sale of her domestic manufactures.

D. Internationally. Exports must equal imports. Protection prohibits a certain proportion of imports. This must be balanced by the influx of specie. The process will continue until the prohibited articles again find their way in, for increase of imports is necessary to

\*The statement of the text seems to be a fair account of the Exposition as to this point. Careful examination would appear to reveal that the doctrine, to be complete, should be amended in one particular. Suppose in the case of the text, that the South received in supplies from the North one-half of the value of the South's exports, the South furnishing to the North none of the South's own products in exchange. It is plain that, to balance, the South would have to turn over to the North one-half of the two-thirds imports from abroad. In this case, one-half of the North's products would go abroad; the other one-half to the South. Of the South's products, all would go abroad; one-half would be returned in foreign, one-half in Northern, products. In order to compute the final distribution of the burden, it is necessary to analyze the domestic, as well as the foreign, exchanges, and to determine to what extent the price of supplies received by the South from the North is under the provisions of the tariff enhanced. That the results indicated in the argument of the Exposition are correct is unquestionable; but the doctrine that the producer of the exports necessarily furnishes the whole of the means of purchasing an equal portion of the imports would seem, without the present qualification, untenable.

balance the exports. But when this occurs, further protection becomes necessary. Foreigners will not continue to send us specie. They will tend to restrict their use of our products, and to pay less for what they do use. This feature is thus stated:

"Every increase of protective duties is necessarily followed, in the present condition of our country, by an expansion of the currency, which must continue to increase till the increased price of production, caused by the expansion, shall be equal to the duty imposed, when a new tariff will be required."<sup>41</sup>

Such are the general principles relating to this subject. In the "Exposition" of South Carolina (1828), written by Calhoun, and in his speeches of February 5, 1840, and March 16, 1842, as well as elsewhere, may be found the statement of these principles, so clear, so explicit, so complete, that dispute would seem forever put at rest. But still the leper lives. It is surely high time he were thrown to the dogs and vultures.

"That the manufacturing States, even in their own opinion, bear no share of the burden of the tariff in reality we may infer with the greatest certainty from their conduct. The fact that they urgently demand an increase, and consider every addition as a blessing, and a failure to obtain one as a curse, is the strong-

<sup>41</sup> Works, III, p. 422. Speech, February 5, 1840, which see *passim*.

est confession that whatever burden it imposes in reality falls, not on them, but on others. Men ask not for burdens, but benefits."<sup>42</sup>

"To have a just conception of its operation in this particular, it will be necessary to bear in mind that the South and the West are the great consumers of the products of the North and East; and that the capacity of the South to consume depends on her great agricultural staples almost exclusively; and that their sale and consumption depend mainly on the foreign market. What, then, would be the effect of reducing her exports to the point indicated, say to forty or fifty millions of dollars? Most certainly to diminish her capacity to consume the products of the North and East, in the same proportion, followed by a corresponding diminution of the revenue, and the commerce and navigation of the country. But the evil would not end there, great as it would be. It would have an equal or greater effect on the consumption of the West. That great and growing section is the provision portion of the Union. Her wide and fertile region gives her an unlimited capacity to produce grain and stock of every description; and these, for the most part, find their market in the staple States. Cut off their exports, and their market would be destroyed; and with it, the means of the West, to a great extent, for carrying on trade

<sup>42</sup> Works, VI, p. 5.

with the Northern and Eastern States. To the same extent, they and the staple States would be compelled to produce their own supplies, and would thus from consumers be converted into rivals with the other section.”<sup>43</sup>

“It is full time for the North, and more especially for New England, to pause and ponder. If they would hear the voice of one who has ever wished them well, I would say that the renewal of the protective system would be one of the greatest calamities that could befall you. Whatever incidental good could be derived from it you have already acquired. It would, if renewed, prove a pure, unadulterated evil. The very reverse is your true policy. The great question for you to decide is how to command the foreign market. The home market, of itself, is too scanty for your skill, your activity, your energy, your unequalled inventive powers, your untiring industry, your vastly increased population, and accumulated capital. Without the foreign market, your unexampled march to wealth and improvement must come to a stand. How, then, are you to obtain the command of the foreign market? That is the vital question.”<sup>44</sup>

“I do not wish, in what I have said, to be considered the advocate of low wages. I am in favor of high wages; and agree that the higher the wages, the stronger the evidence of prosperity; provided (and that is the im-

<sup>43</sup> Works, III, p. 423.

<sup>44</sup> Works, III, p. 431.

portant point) they are so naturally, by the *effectiveness of industry*, and not in consequence of an inflated currency, or any artificial regulation. When I say the effectiveness of industry, I mean to comprehend whatever is calculated to make the labor of one country more productive than that of others. I take into consideration skill, activity, energy, invention, perfection of instruments and means, mechanical and chemical; abundance of capital, natural and acquired; facility of intercourse and exchanges, internal and external; and, in a word, whatever may add to the productiveness of labor. High wages, when attributable to these, are the certain evidence of productiveness, and are, on that account, and that only, the evidence of prosperity. It is easily understood. Just as such labor would command, when compared with the less productive, a greater number of pounds of sugar or tea—a greater quantity of clothing or food—in the same proportion would it command more specie, that is, higher wages, for a day's work. But, sir, here is the important consideration: high wages from such a cause *require no protection*—no, not more than the high wages of a man against the low wages of a boy, of man against woman, or the skilful and energetic against the awkward and feeble. On the contrary, the higher such wages, the less the protection required.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Works, III, p. 435.



“Open the way, remove all restraints, take off the swaddling cloth that bound the limbs of infancy, and let the hardy, intelligent and enterprising sons of New England march forth fearlessly to meet the world in competition, and she will prove, in a few years, the successful rival of old England. The foreign market once commanded, all conflicts between the different sections and industry of the country would cease. It is better for us, and you, that our cotton should go out in yarn and goods than in the raw state; and when that is done, the interests of all the parts of this great Confederacy — North, East, South, and West—with every variety of its pursuits, would be harmonized; but not until then.”<sup>46</sup>

“So far from being an opponent to manufacturing industry, there is not one within the reach of my voice who puts a higher estimate on those arts, mechanical and chemical, by which matter is subjected to the dominion of mind. I regard them as the very basis of civilization, and the principal means designed by Providence for the future progress and improvement of our race. They will be found in progress to react on the moral and political world, thereby producing greater and more salutary changes in both than all other causes combined.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Works, III, p. 436.

<sup>47</sup> Works, IV, p. 103.



In the speeches of February 5, 1840, and March 16, 1842, Mr. Calhoun took the period from 1824 to 1840 in the history of this country for illustration of these principles. If any man can read these speeches, examine the statistics there collated, and still doubt, then is the genus homo ill-defined as rational. (See note at end of chapter.)

Not without interest at the present day is this passage: "The question, in what manner the loss and gain of the system distribute themselves among the several classes of society, is intimately connected with that of their distribution among the several sections. Few subjects present more important points for consideration. \* \* \* No system can be more efficient to rear up a moneyed aristocracy. Its tendency is to make the poor poorer, and the rich richer. Heretofore, in our country, this tendency has displayed itself principally in its effects, as regards the different sections—but the time will come when it will produce the same results between the several classes in the manufacturing States. After we are exhausted, the contest will be between the capitalists and operatives; for into these two classes it must, ultimately, divide society."<sup>48</sup>

The whole protection humbug is in reality no more than a visionary scheme to tax one's self rich. If the theory were sound, every nation on earth could attain the most exalted

<sup>48</sup> Works, VI, p. 25.

eminence by merely imposing duties on its imports.

“Protection, indeed! Call it tribute, levy, exaction, monopoly, plunder; or, if these be too harsh, call it charity, assistance, aid—anything rather than protection, with which it has not a feature in common.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Works, IV, p. 179.

TABLE A.—DOMESTIC EXPORTS.

Years.	Domestic Exports.	Years.	Domestic Exports.
During Period of Protection.		Reduced Duties.	
1825. . .	\$66,941,745	1833. . .	\$70,317,698
1826. . .	53,055,710	1834. . .	81,034,162
1827. . .	58,921,691	1835. . .	101,189,082
1828. . .	50,669,669	1836. . .	106,916,680
1829. . .	55,700,193	1837. . .	95,564,414
1830. . .	59,462,029	1838. . .	96,033,821
1831. . .	61,277,057	1839. . .	103,533,891
1832. . .	63,137,470	1840. . .	113,762,617
	\$469,198,564		\$768,352,365

(From Works, IV, pp. 136, 137.)

TABLE B.—AMERICAN TONNAGE.

Years.	Registered Tonnage.	Enrolled and Licensed.	Total.
During Period of Protection.			
1825. . . . .	\$700,787	\$722,323	\$1,423,111
1826. . . . .	737,978	796,212	1,534,190
1827. . . . .	747,170	873,437	1,620,607
1828. . . . .	812,619	928,772	1,741,391
1829. . . . .	650,142	610,654	1,260,977
1830. . . . .	576,475	615,301	1,191,776
1831. . . . .	620,451	647,394	1,267,846
1832. . . . .	686,989	752,459	1,439,450
Reduced Duties.			
1833. . . . .	750,026	856,122	1,606,149
1834. . . . .	857,438	901,468	1,758,906
1835. . . . .	885,821	939,118	1,824,939
1836. . . . .	897,774	984,328	1,892,202
1837. . . . .	810,447	1,086,238	1,896,685
1838. . . . .	822,591	1,173,047	1,995,638
1839. . . . .	834,244	1,262,234	2,096,478
1840. . . . .	899,764	1,280,999	2,180,763

(From Works, IV, pp. 136, 137.)

TABLE C.—MANUFACTURES.

Years.	Amount in Each Year.	Years.	Amount in Each Year.
Protection.		Reduced Duties.	
1825. . . .	\$5,729,797	1833. . . .	\$6,557,080
1826. . . .	5,495,130	1834. . . .	6,247,893
1827. . . .	5,536,651	1835. . . .	7,694,073
1828. . . .	5,548,354	1836. . . .	6,107,528
1829. . . .	5,412,320	1837. . . .	7,136,997
1830. . . .	5,320,980	1838. . . .	8,397,078
1831. . . .	5,086,890	1839. . . .	10,927,529
1832. . . .	5,050,633	1840. . . .	12,848,840
	\$43,180,755		\$65,917,018

(From Works, IV, pp. 136, 137.)

"The aggregate amount of the value of the exports, in the first series of years, from 1824 to 1833, the period when the protective policy was in its greatest vigor, was \$469,198,564, making an average of \$57,399,945 per annum, throughout the period; while the aggregate amount of value in the last, the period of reduction under the compromise, was \$768,352,365, giving an average of \$96,142,795, and making an aggregate gain, in the period of reduction, over that of protection, of \$299,174,791, and an average annual gain of \$38,646,855, being rather more than 65 per cent. on the average of the former period, an increase without example in any former period of the history of our commerce. This vast increase has had a corresponding effect on our tonnage in the foreign and coasting trade, as will appear by reference to Table B, which contains a statement of our tonnage for the two periods. The aggregate amount of the foreign tonnage at the close of the first period was, in the foreign, 686,989, and the coasting trade 752,456 tons, making the aggregate 1,439,450 tons, against the last, in the foreign trade, of 896,664, and the coasting, 1,280,999; making, in the aggregate, 2,180,763, and an increase, during the period of reduction of duties, over that of protection, of 741,303 tons; while, during the first, there was an actual falling off in the tonnage, as the table will show.

"But it will no doubt be objected that this mighty impulse from reduction, which has so vastly increased our exports and tonnage, was confined to the great agricultural staples; and that the effects will be found to be the reverse on the manufacturing industry of the country. The very opposite is the fact. So far from falling off, it is the very branch of our exports that has received the greatest impulse, as will be apparent by reference to Table C, in which the exports, in value, of domestic manufactures are arranged in tabular form, divided into the same periods. It will appear, by reference to it, that the whole value of the exports of domestic manufactures, during the period of high protective duties, was but \$43,180,755. So far from increasing, there was an actual falling off, comparing the last with the first year of the series, of \$505,633. Now turn to the period of reduction of duties, and mark the contrast. Instead of falling off, the exports increased to \$65,917,018 during the period; and, comparing the last year of the series with the last of that of high protective duties, the increase will be found to be \$7,798,207, greater than the former year by nearly three millions of dollars. This vast increase of the exports of domestic manufactures, even beyond the other branches of exports, is attributable mainly to the fact that a large portion of the articles for which they were exchanged were made duty free during the period under the compromise, while the greater part of those for which the great agricultural staples were exchanged were still subject to high duties." (Works, IV, p. 112.)

[The figures of the text, as well as the tables, show various errors; which, however, do not materially affect the results. The errors are here repeated, for want of means of verification or correction.]

## CHAPTER VI.

### FINANCE.

William Pinkney, the distinguished Maryland statesman, once said of Calhoun, "The strong power of genius, from a higher region than that of argument, had thrown on the subject all the light with which it is the prerogative of genius to invest and illustrate everything. \* \* \*"<sup>50</sup>

The remark nowhere finds better illustration than in Calhoun's treatment of finance. Here, perhaps more than in any other instance, was his extraordinary analytic faculty most severely put to the test, and his pervasive subtlety of intellect most completely exhibited. Affairs of currency and finance ordinarily fill the average mind with apprehension, if not with downright pain. Those who undertake to explain stand usually themselves badly in need of explanation. Hence their painful utterances. But in the present instance the reader is constantly assisted, enlightened, carried forward and what ordinarily is as dry as dust is rendered welcome and full of interest. Mr. Calhoun had dug hard and long at this knotty subject. In 1816, he was chairman of the

<sup>50</sup> Life, Harpers, p. 24.

Committee on National Currency, and in that position, of course, his close attention had been directed to matters of this nature. The results we have from him, therefore, in 1837 and 1838 are fruits of twenty years of reflection and experience. One of the first outlines of his financial views is to be found in his speech of January 13, 1834, on "The Removal of the Deposits"; but their full development appears in 1837 and 1838, the time of the great crash. Feeling it to be a crucial hour in the affairs of the country, he evidently put forth his full powers, whose lasting benefits posterity has hardly begun to realize. As in other instances, his exposition is such that the substance of it may be given in a few words, but fully to unfold the content would require volumes.

The foundation in Mr. Calhoun's philosophy of finance is the distinction between two kinds of money. To define money logically is to stumble on this distinction. All are agreed that there is such a thing as money. Not a few, however, would find it difficult to define. One drawing money today over the bank counter may receive gold, or silver, paper marked "gold certificate" or "silver certificate," notes of the government "promising to pay" so many dollars (what kind not stated), notes of "national banks" likewise "promising to pay," and in addition bearing various legends as intelligible to the average citizen as the hieroglyphs of Egypt. A bank draft or even

the private check of a responsible person in the pocket likewise gives the pleasurable sensation of "money." All these varieties would probably be allowed to rank in the category of that celestial substance. But what are the properties common to all which denominate them "money," currency, cash? The indefeasible *title* which any such instrument carries to a stated portion of this world's goods would seem to be the defining attribute. But a warehouse receipt or a real estate deed surely is not "money." The difference, however, is merely one of degree. These are instruments of title to certain specific pieces of property. Money is an instrument of title to a certain amount of any and all property, which, consequently, all recognize and receive. If this definition be correct, then money need not necessarily consist of coin at all, a proposition apparently indisputable when the currency of war time is remembered. When (as in the Confederacy and elsewhere) specie wholly disappears, is there no "money" in the country?

Here, then, is the distinction hinted at. Money is a title, an abstraction, a right to property. Coin is money only because it vests such a title. Its peculiarity is that it is in itself property. The coin is not in the least necessary. To convey real estate it is sufficient to deliver a deed. It is nowise necessary to put the house itself into the pocket of the buyer. Similarly, to pay money, it is sufficient to pass the title;

it is not necessary to deliver the property itself. Coin is property and title combined. Other money is bare title.

From the failure to note this distinction proceeds infinite confusion, which in turn breeds untold evil. Its insidious influence may undermine the very foundations of society. It is often contended that paper money passes current because redeemable in gold. The contention is in point-blank contradiction of the fact. The very *raison d'être* of banks is that they issue notes (or discounts) in excess of coin deposited in their vaults. Their notes, or checks drawn on them, pass current because they convey title to property, not title to coin. If they conveyed title only to coin, every bank in the country, and the government treasury as well, would instantly collapse. How is it in war time above referred to? The bald repugnance of the claim that paper passes current because redeemable is in that case made most conspicuous.

The idea that paper money is or ought to be redeemable in coin gives a rotten foundation to finance, a false trend to the policy of governments; it gives rise to excessive issues of bank-paper, inflation and overtrading, a plethora of money when it is not legitimately needed, sudden panic and contraction at the crucial hour. It causes currency to depend on conditions to which it should in reality bear no sort of relation. The real foundation on which paper



currency rests is the fact that every one receives it as such. This in turn depends on the credit of the government. Thus, crafty bankers, in reality supported by the credit of the government, disguise the truth by pretending that their paper is based on gold. The result of all this is to place the regulation of the value of the currency in the hands of the financiers—a power which quickly reduces the rest of the community to the condition of dependents and hirelings.

Bank-paper starts out, as Randolph with withering sarcasm remarked, "Promise to pay." It is a lie on its face. According to this pernicious error it is supposed to be payable in coin. The bank and all who have given the least reflection to the subject know perfectly well that they neither can, nor ever intend to, "pay" in coin. It is the grossest kind of imposition on the general confidence. Mr. Calhoun illustrates the matter thus: A man of such financial standing that his friend endorses for him for nothing, makes his note; the friend endorses it. He goes to the bank and exchanges the note so endorsed for these "promises to pay" of the bank. The joint credit of the two is exchanged (ostensibly) for the credit of the bank, and the bank charges 6 or 7 per cent. for the exchange. Why is the bank's credit worth this premium? Because redeemable in gold? Not a bit of it. Because it

is endorsed by the government, made receivable for dues and taxes.

To this error, then, is attributable the league of the banks with the government, an arrangement under which the government receives bank notes in payment of taxes, and pays them away in settlement of government debts. The act, says Mr. Calhoun, is wholly unconstitutional, but, he maintains, Congress has the power of regulating the value of the currency, and, therefore, "If you have a right to receive bank-notes at all—to treat them as money by receiving them in your dues, or paying them away to creditors—you have a right to create a bank."<sup>51</sup> Infinitely better than a league of banks with the government (and far more in accord with the Constitution) is a national bank. In 1834, he advocated such a bank to "unbank the banks,"<sup>52</sup> to let them down softly, retire their circulation by degrees and resume specie payment.

In this matter of finance we find Mr. Calhoun's constructive suggestion no less well-considered and valuable than his destructive criticism. The following extracts are arranged with a view to develop first the trend of his criticism, and then the nature of his suggestion. The direction of the criticism may be outlined thus: 1. Failure to distinguish properly the two kinds of currency, and to conceive clearly

<sup>51</sup> Works, II, p. 336.

<sup>52</sup> Works, II, p. 363.

the true foundation of the credit portion, leads to the treatment of bank-paper as currency. 2. This brings about a league of government and banks. 3. This enlists the financial power on the side of the tax-consuming portion of the community, and so promotes increase of taxes and disbursements; tariffs, patronage, and spoils. 4. It places the regulation of the value of the currency in the hands of the financiers, a power calculated to reduce the rest of the community to the condition of serfs and dependents. 5. It chills emulation, damps ambition, and degrades the whole tone of public affairs. 6. It, in fact, resolves itself into a struggle whether the government or the banks shall concentrate all powers, with the probabilities in favor of the banks. It is the great seminal principle of all our political evils—deeply hidden below the surface, but nevertheless certain to work disastrous consequences to an extent wholly incalculable.

“The credit of the country is an important portion of the currency of the country—credit in every shape, public and private—credit, not only in the shape of paper, but that of faith and confidence between man and man, through the agency of which, in all its forms, the great and mighty exchanges of this commercial country, at home and abroad, are, in a great measure, effected. \* \* \*”<sup>53</sup>

“More than half the errors of life may be

<sup>53</sup> Works, II, p. 331.

traced to fallacies originating in an improper use of words; and among them, not the least mischievous is the application of this word to bank transactions, in a sense wholly different from its original meaning (the word deposit). Originally it meant a thing placed in trust, or pledged to be safely and sacredly kept, till returned to the depositor, without being used by the depositary, while in his possession. All this is changed when applied to a deposit in a bank. \* \* \*<sup>54</sup>

“Of all institutions affecting the great question of the distribution of wealth—a question least explored and the most important of any in the whole range of political economy—the banking institution has, if not the greatest, one of the greatest, and, I fear, most pernicious, influences. \* \* \*<sup>55</sup>

“I shall oppose, strenuously, all attempts \* \* \* to reunite the political and money powers (more dangerous than church and state) in any form or shape; \* \* \*<sup>56</sup>

“With this law so well established, place the money power in the hands of a single individual, or a combination of individuals, and they, by expanding or contracting the currency, may raise or sink prices at pleasure; and, by purchasing when at the greatest depression, and selling at the greatest elevation, may command the whole property and industry of the com-

<sup>54</sup> Works, III, p. 217.

<sup>55</sup> Works, II, p. 333.

<sup>56</sup> Works, III, p. 91.

munity, and control its fiscal operations. The banking system concentrates and places this power in the hands of those who control it, and its force increases just in proportion as it dispenses with a metallic basis. Never was an engine invented better calculated to place the destiny of the many in the hands of the few, or less favorable to that equality and independence which lie at the bottom of our free institutions. \* \* \*<sup>57</sup>

“That the connection between the banks and the government, the receiving and paying away their notes as cash, and the use of the public money from the time of the collection to the disbursement, is the source of immense profit to the banks, cannot be questioned. It is impossible, as I have said, to ascertain with any precision to what extent their issues and circulation depend upon it, but it certainly constitutes a large proportion. A single illustration may throw light upon this point. Suppose the government were to take up the veriest beggar in the street, and enter into a contract with him, that nothing should be received in payment of its dues or for the sales of its public lands in future, except gold and silver and his promissory notes, and that he should have the use of the public funds from the time of their collection until their disbursement. Can any one estimate the wealth which such a contract would confer? His notes

<sup>57</sup> Works, III, p. 115.

would circulate far and wide over the whole extent of the Union; would be the medium through which the exchanges of the country would be performed; and his ample and extended credit would give him a control over all the banking institutions and moneyed transactions of the community. The possession of a hundred millions would not give a control more effectual. I ask, would it be fair, would it be equal, would it be consistent with the spirit of our institutions, to confer such advantages on any individual? And if not on one, would it be if conferred on any number? And if not, why should it be conferred on any corporate body of individuals? How can they possibly be entitled to benefits so vast, which all must acknowledge could not be justly conferred on any number of unincorporated individuals? \* \* \*<sup>58</sup>

“We thus glided imperceptibly into a connection” (banks and government) “which was never recognized by law till 1816 (if my memory serves), but which has produced more important after-consequences and has had a greater control over the destiny of this country than any one of the mighty questions which have so often and deeply agitated the country. To it may be traced, as their seminal principle, the vast and extraordinary expansion of our banking system, our excessive import duties, unconstitutional and profuse disbursements,

<sup>58</sup> Works, III, p. 75.

the protective tariff, and its associated system for spending what it threw into the treasury, followed in time by a vast surplus which the utmost extravagance of the government could not dissipate. \* \* \*''<sup>59</sup>

"Take taxation and disbursement together, and it will always be found that one portion of the community pays into the treasury, in the shape of taxes, more than it receives back in that of disbursements, and that another receives back more than it pays. The former are the taxpayers, and the latter the consumers, making the great, essential, and controlling division in all civilized communities. If, with us, the government has been thrown on the side of the consumers, as it has, it must be attributed to its alliance with the banks, whose influence has been, in consequence, at all times steadily and powerfully on that side. It is to this mischievous and unholy alliance that may be traced almost all the disasters that have befallen us, and the great political degeneracy of the country. \* \* \*''<sup>60</sup>

"It is the remark of a profound statesman\* that the revenue is the State; and, of course, those who control the revenue control the State; and those who can control the money power can the revenue, and through it the State, with the property and industry of the country, in all its ramifications. Let us pause

<sup>59</sup> Works, III, p. 211.

<sup>60</sup> Works, III, p. 233.

\*Edmund Burke.



for a moment and reflect on the nature and extent of this tremendous power. \* \* \*"<sup>61</sup>

"But its most fatal effects originate in its bearing on the moral and intellectual development of the community. The great principle of demand and supply governs the moral and intellectual world no less than the business and commercial. If a community be so constituted as to cause a demand for high mental attainments, or if its honors and rewards are allotted to pursuits that require their development, by creating a demand for intelligence, wisdom, knowledge, justice, firmness, courage, patriotism, and the like, they are sure to be produced. But if, on the contrary, they be allotted to pursuits that require inferior qualities, the higher are sure to decay and perish. I object to the banking system because it allots the honors and rewards of the community, in a very undue proportion, to a pursuit the least of all favorable to the development of the higher mental qualities, intellectual or moral, to the decay of the learned professions, and the more noble pursuits of science, literature, philosophy, and statesmanship, and the great and more useful pursuits of business and industry. With the vast increase of its profits and influence, it is gradually concentrating in itself most of the prizes of life—wealth, honor, and influence—to the great disparagement and degradation of all the liberal, and useful, and gen-

<sup>61</sup> Works, III, p. 114.



erous pursuits of society. The rising generation cannot but feel its deadening influence. The youths who crowd our colleges, and behold the road to honor and distinction terminating in a banking-house, will feel the spirit of emulation decay within them, and will no longer be pressed forward by generous ardor, to mount up the rugged steep of science as the road to honor and distinction, when, perhaps, the highest point they could attain—in what was once the most honorable and influential of all the learned professions—would be the place of attorney to a bank.”<sup>62</sup>

“If this body, instead of being a Senate of the United States, was a deputation from Wall street, sent here to arrange the details of the measure, we would not be at any loss to understand why they are arranged as they are.”<sup>63</sup>

“No wonder, then, that Wall street should shout and clap its hands for joy, on its passage through the other House.” \* \* \* “He is blind indeed who does not see in the signs of the times a strong tendency to plunge the Union as deeply in debt as are many of the States, and to subjugate the whole to the paper system. Every movement and measure indicates it. What are we doing, and what engrosses all our attention from morn to noon, and from week to week, ever since our arrival here, at the commencement of this extraordinary ses-

<sup>62</sup> Works, III, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> Works, IV, p. 7.

sion, and will continue till its end? What but banks, loans, stocks, tariffs, distribution, and supplies? All else is forgotten and absorbed in these; and what are these but parts and parcels of the paper system?"<sup>64</sup>

Wall street, as well as history, seems to repeat itself!

Mr. Calhoun's constitutional currency may be explained in a few extracts.

"It is, then, my impression that, in the present condition of the world, a paper currency in some form, if not necessary, is almost indispensable in financial and commercial operations of civilized and extensive communities. In many respects it has a vast superiority over a metallic currency, especially in great and extended transactions, by its greater cheapness, lightness, and the facility of determining the amount. The great desideratum is to ascertain what description of paper has the requisite qualities of being free from fluctuation in value and liability to abuse, in the greatest perfection. I have shown, I trust, that the bank-notes do not possess these requisites in a degree sufficiently high for this purpose. I go further. It appears to me, after bestowing the best reflection I can give the subject, that no convertible paper, that is no paper whose credit rests upon a *promise to pay*, is suitable for currency. It is the form of credit proper in private transactions between man and man, but

<sup>64</sup> Works, IV, p. 10.

not for a standard of value, to perform exchanges generally, which constitute the appropriate functions of money or currency.

\* \* \* " 65

"On what, then, ought a paper currency to rest? I would say, on demand and supply simply, which regulates the value of everything else—the constant demand which the government has on the community for its necessary supplies. A medium, resting on this demand, which simply obligates the government to receive it in all of its dues, to the exclusion of everything else except gold and silver, and which shall be optional with those who have demands on the government to receive or not, would, it seems to me, be as stable in its value as those metals themselves, and be as little liable to abuse as the power of coining. It would contain within itself a self-regulating power. It could only be issued to those who had claims on the government, and to those only with their consent, and, of course, only at or above par with gold and silver, which would be its habitual state; for, so far as the government was concerned, it would be equal in every respect to gold and silver, and superior in many, particularly in regulating the distant exchanges of the country. Should, however, a demand for gold and silver from abroad, or other accidental causes, depress it temporarily, as compared with the precious

<sup>65</sup> Works, III, p. 83.

metals, it would then return to the treasury, and as it could not be paid out during such depression, its gradual diminution in the market would soon restore it to an equality, when it would again flow out into the general circulation. Thus there would be a constant alternate flux and reflux into and from the treasury, between it and the precious metals; but if at any time a permanent depression in its value be possible from any cause, the only effect would be to operate as a reduction of taxes on the community, and the only sufferer would be the government itself. Against this, its own interest would be a sufficient guaranty.

“Nothing but experience can determine what amount and of what denominations might be safely issued; but it may be safely assumed that the country would absorb an amount greatly exceeding its annual income. Much of its exchanges, which amount to a vast sum, as well as its banking business, would revolve about it, and many millions would thus be kept in circulation beyond the demands of the government. It may throw some light on this subject to state that North Carolina, just after the Revolution, issued a large amount of paper, which was made receivable in dues to her. It was also made a legal tender, but which, of course, was not obligatory after the adoption of the Federal Constitution. A large amount, say between four and five hundred thousand dollars, remained

in circulation after that period, and continued to circulate for more than twenty years at par with gold and silver during the whole time, with no other advantage than being received in the revenue of the State, which was much less than \$100,000 per annum. I speak on the information of citizens of that State, on whom I can rely.”<sup>66</sup>

This defense of the suggestion is interesting:

“When the Senator from Massachusetts (Webster) made his attack on my suggestions, I was disappointed. I expected argument, and he gave us denunciation. It is often easy to denounce, when it is hard to refute; and when that Senator gives us denunciation instead of argument, I conclude that it is because the one is at his command, and the other not.

“We are told the form I suggested is but a repetition of the old continental money—a ghost that is ever conjured up by all who wish to give the banks an exclusive monopoly of government credit. The assertion is not true: there is not the least analogy between them. The one was a promise to pay when there was no revenue, and the other a promise to receive in the dues of government when there is an abundant revenue.

“We are also told that there is no instance of a government paper that did not depreciate. In

<sup>66</sup> Works, III, p. 85.

reply, I affirm that there is none, assuming the form I propose, that ever did depreciate. Whenever a paper, receivable in the dues of government, had anything like a fair trial, it has succeeded. Instance the case of North Carolina, referred to in my opening remarks. The drafts of the treasury at this moment, with all their encumbrance, are nearly at par with gold and silver; and I might add the instance alluded to by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, in which he admits that, as soon as the excess of the issues of the Commonwealth Bank of Kentucky were reduced to the proper point, its notes rose to par. The case of Russia might also be mentioned. In 1827 she had a fixed paper circulation in the form of bank-notes, but which were inconvertible, of upward of \$120,000,000, estimated in the metallic ruble, and which had for years remained without fluctuation, having nothing to sustain it but that it was received in the dues of the government, and that, too, with a revenue of only about \$90,000,000 annually. I speak on the authority of a respectable traveler. Other instances, no doubt, might be added, but it needs no such support. How can a paper depreciate which the government is bound to receive in all its payments, and while those to whom payments are to be made are under no obligation to receive it? From its nature, it can only circulate when at par with gold and silver; and if it should de-

preciate, none could be injured but the government."<sup>67</sup>

This subject may be closed with the following significant extract: "It may be asked, why have I spoken at all? It is not from the expectation of changing a single vote on the opposite side. That is hopeless. \* \* \* They have shut their eyes and closed their ears. The voice of an angel from heaven could not reach their understandings. Why, then, have I raised mine? Because my hope is in truth.

\* \* \* "<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Works, III, p. 122.

<sup>68</sup> Works, IV, p. 200.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SPOILS.

To one who has reflected but casually on the subject it might appear that the collection and disbursement of the revenue of the government is not a matter of very great concern. Mr. Calhoun's classification of communities into taxpayers and tax-consumers at a first glance seems to possess no special significance. The more one reflects upon it, however, the more clearly will its importance appear. It requires a somewhat close examination to disclose the inward truth of the matter. Every citizen contributes something to the government; every citizen receives something back. Even if taxes be perfectly equal, it is impossible that the distribution of them be so. Some, therefore, gain by reason of the government. Others lose. Here at the very outset is a line drawn by self-interest entirely across the body of society. Here is the ultimate basis of party. Given this condition, parties follow as a matter of course, and their respective policies, also, are at once determined. One will favor increase of taxes, wider scope of governmental power; the other will favor the opposite policies. It is, in fact, the ultimate, essential,



division in every community. Tariffs and banks have been described above as influences calculated to distribute wealth unequally. But here is an influence that includes them all. It is indeed the highest class, in which are properly to be included all the institutions of society which contribute to the elevation and enrichment of one party at the expense of the other. "Spoils," in its narrower sense, is understood to include only those bounties and appropriations which proceed directly from the public treasury. But "spoils," in a wider sense, may be understood to include every advantage whatsoever which is derived, however indirectly, from the action of the government. Mr. Calhoun maintains that even in a government under which indirect advantages of this sort did not exist, the direct advantages derived from the control of the revenue, with the honors and emoluments afforded by the government, would be ample to set party strife in motion, with all its dread consequences: factional hatred, corruption, disorder, and finally military despotism.

"\* \* \* Some one portion of the community must pay in taxes more than it receives back in disbursements, while another receives in disbursements more than it pays in taxes. It is, then, manifest, taking the whole process together, that taxes must be, in effect, bounties to that portion of the community which receives more in disbursements than it pays in

taxes; while to the other, which pays in taxes more than it receives in disbursements, they are taxes in reality—burthens, instead of bounties. This consequence is unavoidable. It results from the nature of the process, be the taxes ever so equally laid, and the disbursements ever so fairly made, in reference to the public service. \* \* \*<sup>69</sup>

“Nor would it be less a bounty to the portion of the community which received back in disbursements more than it paid in taxes because received as salaries for official services, or payments to persons employed in executing the works required by the government, or furnishing it with its various supplies, or any other description of public employment, instead of being bestowed gratuitously. It is the disbursements which give additional, and usually, very profitable and honorable employments to the portion of the community where they are made. But to create such employments by disbursements is to bestow on the portion of the community to whose lot the disbursement may fall a far more durable and lasting benefit, one that would add much more to its wealth and population, than would the bestowal of an equal sum gratuitously; and hence, to the extent that the disbursements exceed the taxes, it may be fairly regarded as a bounty. The very reverse is the case in reference to the portion which pays in taxes more

<sup>69</sup> Works, I, p. 19.

than it receives in disbursements. With them, profitable employments are diminished to the same extent, and population and wealth correspondingly decreased.

"The necessary result, then, of the unequal fiscal action of the government is to divide the community into two great classes, one consisting of those who, in reality, pay the taxes, and, of course, bear exclusively the burthen of supporting the government; and the other, of those who are the recipients of their proceeds, through disbursements, and who are, in fact, supported by the government; or, in fewer words, to divide it into taxpayers and tax-consumers."<sup>70</sup>

"But, as great as is this number" (officials and employees) "it gives a very imperfect conception of the sum total of those who, as furnishing supplies or otherwise, are connected with, and more or less dependent on, the government, and, of course, liable to be influenced by its patronage, the number of whom, with their dependents, cannot even be conjectured. If to these be added the almost countless host of expectants who are seeking to displace those in office, or to occupy their places as they become vacant, all of whom must look to the executive for the gratification of their wishes, some conception may be formed of the immense number subject to the influence of the executive patronage."<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Works, I, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Works, V, p. 149.

“\* \* \* \* When offices, instead of being considered as public trusts, to be conferred on the deserving, were regarded as the spoils of victory, to be bestowed as rewards for partisan services, without respect to merit; when it came to be understood that all who hold office hold by the tenure of partisan zeal and party service, it is easy to see that the certain, direct, and inevitable tendency of such a state of things is to convert the entire body of those in office into corrupt and supple instruments of power, and to raise up a host of hungry, greedy, and subservient partisans, ready for every service, however base and corrupt. Were a premium offered for the best means of extending to the utmost the power of patronage; to destroy the love of country, and to substitute a spirit of subserviency and man-worship; to encourage vice and discourage virtue; and, in a word, to prepare for the subversion of liberty and the establishment of despotism, no scheme more perfect could be devised; and such must be the tendency of the practice, with whatever intention adopted, or to whatever extent pursued.”<sup>72</sup>

“The same amount of patronage and influence, in proportion to the extent and population of a country, which, in a small State, moderately populous, would be perfectly safe, might prove fatal in an extensive and populous community, just as a much smaller military

<sup>72</sup> Works, V, p. 152.

force, in proportion, would hold under subjection the latter than the former. The principle is the same in both cases—the great advantage which an organized body, such as a government or an army, has over an unorganized mass, an advantage increasing with the increased difficulty of concert and coöperation, and this, again, increasing with the number and dispersion of those on whose concert and coöperation resistance depends; and hence, from their combined action, both as applied to the civil and military, the great advantage which power has over liberty in large and populous countries, an advantage so great that it is utterly impossible in such countries to defend the latter against the former, unless aided by a highly artificial political organization such as ours, based on local and geographical interests. If to this difficulty, resulting from numbers and extent only, there be added others of a most formidable character—the greater capacity, in proportion, on the part of the government, in large communities, to seize on and corrupt all the organs of public opinion, and thus to delude and impose on the people; the greater tendency in such communities to the formation of parties on local and separate interests, resting on opposing and conflicting principles, with separate and rival leaders at the head of each, and the great difficulty of combining such parties in any system of re-

sistance against the common danger from the government—some conception may be formed of the vast superiority which that organized and central party, consisting of office-holders and office-seekers, with their dependents, forming one compact, disciplined corps, wielded by a single individual, without conflict of opinion within, either as to policy or principle, and aiming at the single object of retaining and perpetuating power in their own ranks, must have, in such a country as ours, over the people, a superiority so decisive that it may be safely asserted that, whenever the patronage and influence of the government are sufficiently strong to form such a party, liberty, without a speedy reform, must inevitably be lost.”<sup>73</sup>

“The disease is daily becoming more aggravated and dangerous, and if it be permitted to advance for a few years longer with the rapidity with which it has of late, it will soon pass beyond the reach of remedy. This is no party question. Every lover of this country, and of its institutions, be his party what it may, must see and deplore the rapid growth of patronage, with all its attendant evils, and the certain catastrophe which awaits its further progress, if not timely arrested. The question now is not how, or where, or with whom the danger originated, but how it is to be arrested; not the cause, but the remedy; not how our

<sup>73</sup> Works, V, p. 159.

institutions and liberty have been endangered, but how they are to be rescued. \* \* \*<sup>74</sup>

Upon looking back over the field that has now been covered, it will be perceived that Mr. Calhoun's analysis of each of these three great influences ("spoils," banks, tariff) discovers similar elements, and emphasizes the same tendency. In each case the first requisite is to secure the power of the government; to the politician it is requisite as the means of obtaining offices, salaries, appropriations, "jobs"; to the financier it is requisite as a means of obtaining the use and control of the government credit; to the manufacturer it is requisite as the means of obtaining higher prices for his products. The object in each case is substantially the same—under form of law to take from others and appropriate to themselves more than would otherwise be so taken and appropriated. This oneness of purpose and community of interest naturally brings about a coalition of the three classes. Whatever quarrels or misunderstandings may occur in the interim are happily compounded when it comes to what all recognize to be the great central prize, the Presidential election. The following passage gives a description, sixty years old, of the nature and workings of this coalition: "But it would be doing injustice to charge the evils which have followed from the system, and the greater which still threaten,

<sup>74</sup> Works, V, p. 189.



exclusively on the manufacturing interest. Although it ostensibly originates with it, yet in fact it is the least efficient, and the most divided, of all that combination of interests from which the system draws its support. Among them, the first and most powerful is that active, vigilant, and well-trained corps which lives on the government, or expects to live on it, which prospers most when the revenue is the greatest, the treasury the fullest, and the expenditures the most profuse; and, of course, is ever the firm and faithful supporter of whatever system shall extract most from the pockets of the rest of the community, to be emptied into theirs. The next in order—when the government is connected with the banks, when it receives their notes in its dues, and pays them away as cash, and uses them as its depositories and fiscal agents—are the banking and other associated interests, stock-jobbers, brokers, and speculators; and which, like the other, profit the more in consequence of the connection—the higher the revenue, the greater its surplus and the expenditures of the government. It is less numerous, but still more active and powerful, in proportion, than the other. These form the basis; and on these, political aspirants who hope to rise to power and control through it, rear their party organization. It is they who infuse into it the vital principle, and give life and energy and direction to the whole. This formidable combination, thus vivified and di-



rected, rose to power in the late great political struggle, and is now in the ascendant; and it is to its death-like efforts to maintain and consolidate its power that this and the late session owe their extraordinary proceedings."<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Works, IV, p. 199.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TEXAS AND OREGON—I.

In 1843, Mr. Calhoun withdrew from the Senate. The following passage from a letter may be quoted to show what were his plans for the future at that time: "When I resigned my seat in the Senate, I intended to close my public life, unless the voice of the people should freely call me to take charge of the administration of the government, or the occurrence of some great calamity should clearly demand my return to it, as a duty, neither of which had I any reason to anticipate. Acting in conformity with this fixed intention, I have appropriated the rest of my days to my entire satisfaction, and among other things, to a task which I am very desirous of executing, and to do which would engross all the spare time on which, at my period of life, I have a right to calculate. No consideration of a personal character could possibly induce me to break my arrangement and return to public life. As far as I am concerned, mine is closed, to my entire satisfaction. I have done my duty to the country. I have devoted the prime of my life to its service, and to the best of my abilities endeavored to promote its interest. I have done so because it

was my duty, without looking to any reward beyond; and aside from duty, neither government nor people can bestow any reward on me which could induce me to return to public life."<sup>76</sup>

This time (1843) may well be taken as one of the great lines of division in his career. One might say it is the end of the second era of his public life. The first extended from 1811 to 1833, when, as Congressman, Secretary of War, and Vice-President, he was constantly before the public, as a buoyant, progressive, young statesman. He had become conspicuous by many brilliant services, was rich in honors, second only to one in popularity. In 1833, a deeper note is sounded. He then appears in the character in which it was his to render to his country (and to mankind) services far more signal, and of far more lasting benefit, and yet at the time almost wholly unappreciated—unappreciated by all save what he once styled his own "virtuous and noble State." The years 1833-43 comprise this second era. Almost constantly on the side of the minority, he is found struggling, always struggling—now against Jackson, now against Webster, now against Clay; struggling to discover truth and to proclaim it. During this period were worked out his principal contributions to the world's stock of political and economic truth, some slight account of which has been attempted in

<sup>76</sup> Correspondence, p. 574. Letter dated March 9, 1844.

the preceding chapters. Mr. Calhoun was now (1843) past sixty. He had been in the thick of every fight for thirty-two years. It would seem that he was now well entitled to "crown a youth of labor with an age of ease." For his own sake one is almost disposed to regret that his remaining years were not to be spent as outlined in this letter. To retire at this ripe age, weary with service, and full of honors, to the peace and repose of his own home, and there to enjoy the society of his devoted family and no less devoted friends, to direct his farm (his interest in agriculture was always keen), and to bestow his leisure hours on the composition of the work indicated—this to him would have been ideal. But it was not thus written in the book of fate. Indeed, only one of the expectations mentioned was destined to be realized. It is evident that the "task which I am very desirous of executing" refers to a project which later resulted in the "Disquisition on Government." The nature of this work, the time of its conception and execution, its intention and scope, will be more fully treated hereafter. It is a matter worthy of the most careful attention in considering Mr. Calhoun's career and the place he is destined to occupy in history.

The third and last period of his public life extends from 1843 to the time of his death in 1850. The events of those years, and his relations to them, are fitting topics for a great

epic. He and all his contemporaries were caught up, as it were, in a great resistless on-flowing current, already beginning to roar and foam in treacherous rapids, and giving certain promise of some Niagara, which was not to be reached, however, until 1860.

During the year 1842-43 the political pot was hotly boiling, as in many another year, and slowly the question worked itself out whether "the voice of the people should freely call" Mr. Calhoun to the Presidency. To R. M. T. Hunter he writes, December 22, 1843. "I write now to say that I have prepared an address to my political friends and supporters, and have sent one copy to our central committee in Charleston, and the other to our two Senators, with a letter addressed to my friends and supporters in Congress. The address contains my reasons for declining to permit my name to go before the Baltimore convention. I object to the mode in which it is constituted, and the tariff principles of an influential portion of those who will be represented in the convention (principally New York and Pennsylvania). I have reasoned both grounds pretty fully, and taken high grounds for my course. I have taken the step on my own individual responsibility, leaving my friends free to say whether they will support the stand I have taken or not. My course is irrevocably taken."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Correspondence, p. 555.

To his brother-in-law, James E. Calhoun, for whom, of the correspondents of his own family, he seems to have entertained the highest regard and affection, he writes, February 7, 1844: "My Dear Sir: I have written to the editor of *The Mercury* to correct the statement that my name was withdrawn by myself. I could not do it consistently with the position I occupied, which was a passive one (neither to decline or seek the office); nor with my address, which simply withheld my name from the Baltimore convention, leaving my friends and supporters to decide what course ought to be taken, under circumstances, in reference to both themselves and myself. Indeed, my principal object in transmitting it to the central committee of the State was to give them, as the representative of my friends and supporters in the State, an opportunity to decide in advance what that course ought to be. I had concluded to make up my mind to abide by its decision, be it to support me or not, and be their motive what it might, for it would be in vain for my name to be continued before the people unless heartily supported by my friends in the State. In its decision I must be content; but it must be *their* decision, and *so announced*; and I have accordingly requested *The Mercury* to state the fact, if the withdrawal was made on its authority. To that extent it is my duty to go, but I can go no farther."

<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Correspondence, p. 566.

It is interesting to compare the words above, "neither to decline or seek the office," with the historic declaration of Lowndes that "The Presidency is an office neither to be declined nor solicited."

Such was the termination of Mr. Calhoun's candidacy. February 10, 1844, he writes to an old friend: "I am now disentangled from the fraudulent game of President making, and hope never to have to do anything with it again. It is abhorrent to my feelings and taste. The truth is that both of the great parties have degenerated from their original standard so far that they have ceased to represent their original principles. The Whigs are the old Federal party turned demagogue, a thing most abhorrent to their original character; the Democrats are the old Republican party turned spoilsmen, a thing equally abhorrent to their original character."<sup>79</sup>

Scarcely a month had elapsed from the date of this letter when Mr. Calhoun was again plunged into the thick of the fight. President Tyler writes him March 6, 1844: "My Dear Sir: After a free and frank conversation with our friends, Governor McDuffie and Mr. Holmes, of South Carolina, and in full view of the important negotiation now pending between us and foreign governments, I have unhesitatingly nominated you this day as Secretary of State, in place of my much lamented

<sup>79</sup> Correspondence, p. 568. Letter to Duff Green.

friend, Judge Upshur. I have been prompted to this course by reference to your great talents and deservedly high standing with the country at large. We have reached a great crisis in the condition of public affairs which, I trust, will assume the place of a commanding epoch in our country's history. The annexation of Texas to the Union, and the settlement of the Oregon question on a satisfactory basis, are the great ends to be accomplished. The first is in the act of competition" (completion?) "and will admit of no delay; the last had but barely opened when death snatched from me my lamented friend. Do I expect too much of you when I, along with others, anticipate at your hands a ready acquiescence in meeting my wishes, by coming to the aid of the country at this important period?

"While your name was before the country as a prominent candidate for the Presidency I could not have urged this request without committing alike an offense to yourself and many others; but now, since your friends have withdrawn your name from that exciting canvass, I feel it every way due to the country to seek to avail myself, in the administration of public affairs, of your high and exalted talents.

"I hope the action of the Senate will be as prompt as my own, and that you will immediately be at my side."<sup>80</sup>

Calhoun replied, 16th of the same month:

<sup>80</sup> Correspondence, p. 938.



"My Dear Sir: I received by the mail of yesterday your letter of the 6th inst., written in the morning, and informing me that you had nominated me to fill the vacancy in the State Department occasioned by the lamented death of Mr. Upshur, and your note of the same date, written in the evening, that the Senate had unanimously confirmed the nomination.

"I highly appreciate the honor you have conferred on me in selecting me to fill the department at a crisis when two such important negotiations are pending, and the very flattering manner the nomination was confirmed.

"It is with great reluctance that I return again to public life; but, under the circumstances, I do not feel myself at liberty to decline the appointment. But, as nothing short of the magnitude of the crisis, occasioned by the pending negotiations, could induce me to leave my retirement, I accept on the condition that, when they are concluded, I shall be at liberty to retire. \* \* \*"<sup>81</sup>

In this connection, the following letter from Francis Wharton to Calhoun is full of interest. Wharton had for some time been a correspondent and warm admirer of Calhoun. It is a pleasing instance of the friendship and interest shown by the great Senator for young men, a trait of his character which is frequently mentioned, and which is highly indicative of the man: "My Dear Sir: The news of your ap-

<sup>81</sup> Correspondence, p. 577.

pointment and confirmation as Secretary of State has just reached Philadelphia, and I am going to take the liberty of telling you that the hope and trust of your friends in this section of the country is that you should accept the appointment. Independently of the conviction that no other than a master mind can adjust the Oregon negotiation; that such a labor requires the whole of that great intellect which can only be found in two men of the country, of whom you are one; that there is but one man that can unite to such an intellect a character which precludes the supposition of fear, favor, and affection, and that that man is yourself—independently, I say, of such reasons, I cannot doubt that your appearance once more in public life, in a catholic attitude, will awaken in the men of the Middle and Northern States the feelings of pride and attachment with which they looked upon you in 1812 and 1816. The parenthesis of nullification—misunderstood as it is by the great majority at the North—will be merged, even in the minds of the most prejudiced, into the whole context of your history. Believe me, looking at you once more as the representative of the Union as a whole will open the old fountains of affection. There was a time when Pennsylvania would have voted for you by acclamation—that time may come again. I may be sanguine, but who would not be sanguine when so great a consummation as the restoration of the North

to the true republican creed has become, for the first time for twenty years, probable? The Secretaryship of War made you the second man in the affections of the nation; the Secretaryship of State will make you the first."<sup>82</sup>

The average reader today, upon the mention of Texas and Oregon, thinks of the immediate areas which now appear on the map under those names, and is rather at a loss to understand the great significance attached in all histories to "Texas and Oregon." A glance at the map ( \* ) will at once supply the explanation. It will be seen that the territory acquired by these negotiations and the Mexican War embraces practically the whole of the territory west of the Mississippi valley, and no inconsiderable portion of the valley itself. It comprises, in fact, more than one-third of the whole area of the country.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say, in the first place, that the acquisition of the Oregon territory without war with England was due to Mr. Calhoun; further, that the annexation of Texas was due to him; and, finally, that had his counsel and influence prevailed, the vast territory acquired from Mexico after the Mexican War would have been acquired without the war, and at no greater pecuniary cost.

The two questions, Texas and Oregon, were intimately connected. Texas had thrown off

<sup>82</sup> Correspondence, p. 939.

(\*) See map, opposite page 112.

the Mexican yoke in 1836, by the struggle which culminated in the decisive Texan victory of San Jacinto. The Texan people the same year, "upon a full poll," declared in favor of annexation, with only ninety-three votes contra. The United States had early recognized the independence of Texas, and France and England shortly followed suit. The overtures of Texas in behalf of annexation were not promptly met in this country, as appears from the fact that the matter was still open at the period when Mr. Calhoun was called to the Secretaryship. In the meantime, England began to cast longing glances on Texas. Her friendly offices took the shape of urging Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas upon the condition of the abolition of slavery. English interests in Mexico were considerable, hence English influence large. Texas was very "short" on cash, wherefore she, too, was in position to lean readily for aid on anyone fortified with a bulky strong-box. Thus, in the event of trouble between the United States and England about Oregon, Texas would be for England a broad back door, readily opened, and through which easy entrance would be afforded to the very heart of the Union. Mr. Calhoun's idea of the proper policy for this country was first to close this back door, and to close it quickly, by the annexation of Texas. This done, the United States would be on a much better footing for the Oregon negotia-

tion. The necessity for haste was great, as Texas was hard pressed for assistance, financial or otherwise, and would surely form foreign connections if she could not come to an understanding with the United States. The Oregon matter was of an exactly opposite character. There (Mr. Calhoun's idea was), the longer the *status quo* was maintained, the stronger would become the position of the United States.

In a speech in 1847, Mr. Calhoun narrates the following events which occurred in 1843: “\* \* \* I ascertained, from sources perfectly reliable, that at the World's Convention the American delegation suggested to the abolitionists of England that then was the time to act, and if they wished to aim a fatal blow at slavery, it must be in Texas, and, in order to do that, England must obtain control there. I received information—I will not say official, but from a quarter in which there could be no mistake—that an interview had taken place between Lord Aberdeen and a deputation of the World's Convention. I was then at home in South Carolina, and immediately transmitted to the Secretary of State that information, accompanied by my opinion that it demanded instant attention. I suppose that letter and my communication formed one of the reasons for the movement then made for annexation.”<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Works, IV, p. 333.

The "World's Convention" here referred to assembled in London in June, 1843, for abolition purposes. The American delegates, it seems, were active in trying to induce the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Aberdeen, to intervene in behalf of the abolition of slavery in Texas. Lord Aberdeen, being a diplomat, "gave them no countenance," but "informed them that by every proper means of influence he would encourage the abolition of slavery, and that he had recommended the Mexican government to interest itself in the matter."

The following extract from a letter written by Mr. Calhoun in 1845 will throw some further light on the development of this matter :  
" \* \* \* The course taken by Dr. Smith, Secretary of State, in opposition to annexation surprised me. I had regarded him as a firm friend of annexation. I received two letters from him in 1843, one after I had left the Senate and retired to my residence here, giving me a full account of the intrigues of the abolitionists with the British government, in reference to Texas, and the countenance which they received from Lord Aberdeen. I enclosed the one I received here to Mr. Upshur, in a long letter addressed to him, and urging on him the necessity of adopting some decided measure to defeat a scheme which, if it should succeed, must prove fatal to the South and the Union. The information which the doctor's

letter contained, and the views I presented, I doubt not had due influence in bringing about the negotiation which followed, and which we may, I trust, now say with certainty will end in annexation."<sup>84</sup>

"Dr. Smith" was *Chargé d'Affaires* for Texas at London and Paris at the time spoken of. The narrative of this intrigue seems not unimportant in connection with annexation. Probably very few besides Mr. Calhoun knew at the time of his communication to Mr. Upshur the inside details, and that communication, though nowise official, doubtless, as hinted, gave a fresh impetus to the negotiations.

Mr. Calhoun did not arrive in Washington until very late in March. The treaty was signed by himself, plenipotentiary for the United States, and the plenipotentiaries for Texas, April 12th. On April 18th he opened fire on the British Minister at Washington, Mr. Pakenham, discussing the various features of the Texas situation, and adroitly throwing on England the responsibility of annexation. This, of course, was immediately disclaimed, but it is interesting to note the skill with which Mr. Calhoun at once put his opponent on the defensive and turned the points of his position.

Eighteen hundred and forty-four is divisible by four, so there was a presidential election pending. The abolitionists were rabid against

<sup>84</sup> Correspondence, p. 659.

annexation, and both candidates stood in need of abolitionist votes. The treaty, thus, was not at once ratified. It was not until a year later that Congress passed the act under which annexation was consummated.

Southern statesmen were all agreed at that time on the vital connection of Texas with the peace and prosperity of the South. At this day it is hard to look at the map and understand how any American, North or South, could ever have doubted for a moment the value of Texas, not to the South alone, but to the whole Union; and how anyone could ever have failed to realize that Texas under foreign control would be a vast wedge of heterogeneous material protruding disastrously into the vitals of the Union is wholly incomprehensible. Moral causes may seldom be ascertained with final exactitude. Whether annexation was due to Mr. Calhoun alone, or to him principally, may remain matter of dispute. But the fact at any rate is certain that eight years, when this matter was in other hands, Texas remained outside; in his hands, within a year, Texas was inside the Union.



## CHAPTER IX.

### TEXAS AND OREGON—II.

The annexation of Texas left open for adjustment between Mexico and the United States the boundary line of Texas and Mexico. Mr. Calhoun favored the most liberal terms for Mexico in this negotiation. As he saw it, however, the first step now was to close the Oregon controversy, for as long as that troublesome question remained open, the Mexican negotiation was doubly difficult. Oregon settled, the Mexican controversy, almost as a matter of course, could be satisfactorily terminated. Until he had annexation well under way, he let the Oregon matter lie. Mr. Pakenham, on July 22, 1845, writes, calling Mr. Calhoun's attention to previous correspondence with the State Department, supposing "other engagements," etc. To which Mr. Calhoun one month afterwards (in which month he was doubtless carefully charging the diplomatic gun) indicates to Mr. Pakenham that, "having disposed of other matters," etc., "he will now be happy," etc.

So romantic is the character of this Oregon region that even the State documents, usually so dreadful, read almost like a novel. The

same rapid and effective advance by Mr. Calhoun on his opponent is here observable as in the Texas papers. Mr. Pakenham himself, while courteously admitting nothing and denying everything, as is the way of diplomats, is evidently carried away by the force and fascinated by the interest of Mr. Calhoun's dispatches. The title to Oregon was very complicated, as such titles must always be. The United States had divers claims—claims in their own right, by exploration and discovery; claims under France by the Louisiana Treaty, and finally, claims under Spain, by the Florida Treaty, 1818. The territory in dispute extended from the north limit of Mexico,  $42^{\circ}$ , to the south limit of Russia,  $54^{\circ} 40'$ . The question had been open since the Florida Treaty (1818), and ever since that time a convention of joint occupancy had been in force between Great Britain and the United States, under the terms of which citizens of either nation could settle in the territory, and either party could terminate the arrangement by giving one year's notice. Repeated efforts had been made to arrive at a settlement, but all had proved unsuccessful. At this stage the effort of the British negotiators was to limit the United States on the north by the Columbia River. To establish, on the other hand, for the United States, a valid claim to the whole of the basin of that river was the main effort of Mr. Calhoun, without, however, prejudicing

any other existing rights. His arguments to establish that title seem hard to resist. He had thus placed the negotiation on a solid basis, and was laying his lines for continuance in the direction indicated when a new administration came to the helm. Mr. Polk, the new President, did not continue Mr. Calhoun in the Secretaryship. His "indiscretion" did not "serve him well." It was not many months before the country was worked up to fever heat on the Oregon question. "Fifty-four forty or fight" and "All of Oregon or none" became the popular cries of the hour.

It was under these circumstances that occurred one of the most dramatic events in the history of South Carolina. Judge D. E. Huger resigned his seat in the Senate in order to make room for Mr. Calhoun, to whom not only the State but apparently the whole country had turned instinctively at this crisis as the only man able to avert the impending peril. The veteran statesman had retired to his home in March. It was not long before he was routed out, as will appear from the following letter to his son-in-law, T. G. Clemson, December 13, 1845: "\* \* \* You will have seen that I have again been elected to the Senate, much against my inclination, but under such circumstances that I could not with propriety decline accepting. \* \* \*

"I had a very interesting tour in the West. I was received everywhere in a manner suf-

ficient to gratify the feelings of any, the most illustrious for talents and public service. All parties everywhere united without distinction in a demonstration of respect, not exceeded by that shown to General Jackson in passing through the same places, and much greater than that extended to any other citizen. I everywhere was received as the guest of the place, and passed without expense or charge through every town to and from Memphis."<sup>85</sup> This was upon the occasion of the Memphis Convention, of the valley and adjoining States, to consider the development of navigation of the river, and of the consequent commerce. The celebrated "Memphis Memorial" was contributed by Mr. Calhoun on this occasion, in which he advocated the improvement of the river by the Federal government as constitutional under the commerce clause.

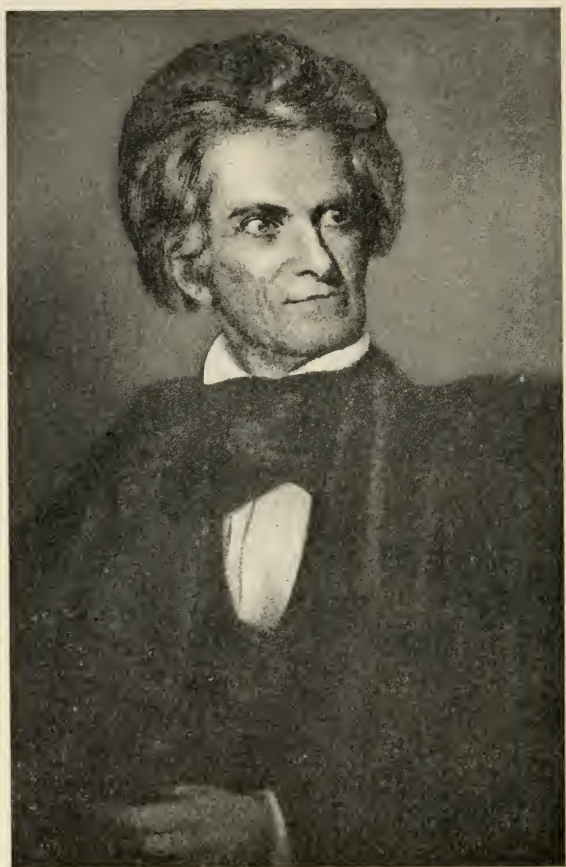
But to return from this digression. It was under the circumstances outlined above that Mr. Calhoun once more put on the harness and journeyed from Fort Hill to Washington. Not since 1833 and Nullification possibly had he been to an equal extent "the observed of all observers." A New York politician writes, December 26, 1845: "Twenty times a day I am asked, 'What course will the great Calhoun take on the Oregon question?'"<sup>86</sup>

His speech on this occasion is one of the

<sup>85</sup> Correspondence, p. 674.

<sup>86</sup> Correspondence, p. 1066.





FROM A PORTRAIT IN THE POSSESSION OF THE LATE  
ROBERT N. GOURDIN.

sublimest he ever delivered. It adds an inspiring stanza to the great road-song to whose stately rhythm the Anglo-Saxon marches down the centuries.\*

“But I oppose war, not simply, on the patriotic ground of a citizen looking to the freedom and prosperity of his own country, but on still broader grounds, as a friend of improvement, civilization, and progress. Viewed in reference to them, at no period has it ever been so desirable to preserve the general peace which now blesses the world. Never in its history has a period occurred so remarkable as that which has elapsed since the termination of the great war in Europe, with the Battle of Waterloo, for the great advances made in all these particulars. Chemical and mechanical discoveries and inventions have multiplied beyond all former example, adding, with their advance, to the comforts of life in a degree far greater and more universal than all that was ever known before. Civilization has, during the same period, spread its influence far and wide, and the general progress in knowledge, and its diffusion through all ranks of society, has outstripped all that has ever gone before it. The two great agents of the physical world have become subject to the will of man, and have been made subservient to his wants and enjoyments; I allude to steam and electricity, under whatever name the latter may be called. The

\*See Author's Note at end of chapter.

former has overcome distance, both on land and water, to an extent which former generations had not the least conception was possible. It has, in effect, reduced the Atlantic to half its former width, while, at the same time, it has added threefold to the rapidity of intercourse by land. Within the same period, electricity, the greatest and most diffuse of all known physical agents, has been made the instrument for the transmission of thought—I will not say with the rapidity of lightning, but by lightning itself. Magic wires are stretching themselves in all directions over the earth, and when their mystic meshes shall have been united and perfected, our globe itself will become endowed with sensitiveness, so that whatever touches on any one point will be instantly felt on every other. All these improvements, all this increasing civilization, all the progress now making, would be in a great measure arrested by a war between us and Great Britain. As great as it is, it is but the commencement—the dawn of a new civilization, more refined, more elevated, more intellectual, more moral, than the present and all preceding it. Shall it be we who shall incur the high responsibility of retarding its advance, and by such a war as this would be?

“I am, in this connection, opposed to war between the United States and Great Britain. They are the two countries furthest in advance in this great career of improvement and amel-



ioration of the condition of our race. They are, besides, the two most commercial, and are diffusing, by their widely extended commerce, their blessings over the whole globe. We have been raised up by Providence for these great and noble purposes, and I trust we shall not fail to fulfil our high destiny. I am, besides, especially opposed to war with England at this time, because I hold that it is now to be decided whether we are to exist in future as friends or enemies. War, at this time, and for this cause, would decide supremacy; we shall hereafter stand in the attitude of enemies. It would give birth to a struggle in which one or the other would have to succumb before it terminated; and which, in the end, might prove ruinous to both. On the contrary, if war can be avoided, powerful causes are now in operation, calculated to cement and secure a lasting—I hope a perpetual—peace between the two countries, by breaking down the barriers which impede their commerce, and thereby uniting them more closely by a vastly enlarged commercial intercourse, equally beneficial to both. If we should now succeed in setting the example of free trade between us, it would force all other civilized countries to follow it in the end. The consequence would be to diffuse a prosperity greater and more universal than can be well conceived, and to unite by bonds of mutual interest the people of all countries. But in advocating the cause of free trade, I am

actuated not less by the political consequences likely to flow from it than the advantages to be derived from it in an economical point of view. I regard it in the dispensation of Providence as one of the great means of ushering in the happy period foretold by inspired prophets and poets when war should be no more.

“I am finally opposed to war because peace—peace is preëminently our policy. There may be nations, restricted to small territories, hemmed in on all sides, so situated that war may be necessary to their greatness. Such is not our case. Providence has given us an inheritance stretching across the entire continent, from east to west, from ocean to ocean, and from north to south, covering by far the greater and better part of its temperate zone. It comprises a region not only of vast extent but abundant in all resources; excellent in climate; fertile and exuberant in soil; capable of sustaining, in the plentiful enjoyment of all the necessities of life, a population of ten times our present number. Our great mission, as a people, is to occupy this vast domain; to replenish it with an intelligent, virtuous, and industrious population; to convert the forests into cultivated fields; to drain the swamps and morasses, and cover them with rich harvests; to build up cities, towns, and villages in every direction, and to unite the whole by the most rapid intercourse between all the parts. War would but impede the fulfilment of this high

mission, by absorbing the means and diverting the energies which should be devoted to the purpose. On the contrary, secure peace, and time, under the guidance of a sagacious and cautious policy, "a wise and masterly inactivity," will speedily accomplish the whole. I venture to say "a wise and masterly inactivity" in despite of the attempt to cast ridicule upon the expression. Those who have made the attempt would seem to confound such inactivity with mere inaction. Nothing can be more unlike. They are as wide apart as the poles. The one is the offspring of indolence, or ignorance, or indifference. The other is the result of the profoundest sagacity and wisdom—a sagacity which looks into the operations of the great causes in the physical, moral, and political world; which, by their incessant operation, are ever changing the condition of nations for good or evil; and wisdom, which knows how to use and direct them when acting favorably, by slight touches, to facilitate their progress, and by removing impediments which might thwart or impede their course—and not least, to wait patiently for the fruits of their operation. He who does not understand the difference between such inactivity and mere inaction—the doing of nothing—is still in the hornbook of politics, without a glimpse of those higher elements of statesmanship by which a country is elevated to greatness and prosperity. Time is operating in our favor

with a power never before exerted in favor of any other people. It is our great friend, and under the guidance of such a policy it will accomplish all that we can desire. Our population is now increasing at the rate of about 600,000 annually, and is progressing with increased rapidity every year. It will average, if not impeded, nearly a million during the next twenty-five years, at the end of which period our population ought to reach to upwards of forty millions. With this vast increase, it is rolling westwardly with a strong and deep current, and will, by the end of that period, have spread from ocean to ocean. Its course is irresistible. The coast of the Pacific will then be probably as densely populated, and as thickly studded with towns and villages, in proportion to its capacity to sustain population, as that of the Atlantic now is. At the same rate, we shall have increased to upwards of eighty millions of people at the end of another twenty-five years, when, with one foot on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific, and occupying a position between the eastern and the western coasts of the old continent, we shall be better able to control the commerce of both oceans, and to exert an influence over both continents, than any other country in the world. If we avoid war, and adhere to peace, all this will be effected—effected, I trust, without the loss of our free popular institutions. I am aware how difficult is the task to preserve

free institutions over so wide a space, and so immense a population; but we are blessed with a Constitution admirably calculated to accomplish it. Its elastic power is unequalled, which is to be attributed to its federal character. The hope of success depends on preserving that feature in its full perfection, and adhering to peace as our policy. War may make us great; but let it never be forgotten that peace only can make us both great and free.”<sup>87</sup>

He writes to his daughter some days afterwards, describing this occasion. He always gives her full accounts of what is going on, and between her and himself there seems to have subsisted a relation of the most perfect sympathy and affection:

“\* \* \* I enclose you a copy of my speech delivered last week on the Oregon question. I shall enclose several to Mr. Clemson, but the one enclosed is intended especially for yourself. Many of my friends think it the best I ever delivered. It was certainly received in a manner highly calculated to be gratifying to myself and friends. I received congratulations on all sides when I sat down, even from the most violent of the 54° 40' men. Such was the anxiety to hear me that the crowd began to collect at eight o'clock, and long before the hour the galleries and the passages were blocked up. Thousands had to retire for the want of room.

<sup>87</sup> Works, IV, p. 283 *et seq.*

"I spoke very late in the debate, after, indeed, it had begun to drag very heavily, and delicacy forbid me from touching on the subject of title. I felt the delicacy of my position, and could not (knowing the great anxiety to hear me) but feel some solicitude; and was not a little relieved when all was over, and I could perceive from indications all around that I had not fell below expectations. \* \* \*

"I have said more about myself, my dear daughter, than I would to any one else, not from any feeling of vanity, but because I know it would gratify you and Mr. Clemson to learn in what manner my effort on such a question was received by the audience on the occasion.  
\* \* \* '88

War was averted, the negotiation closed by a compromise, the forty-ninth parallel of latitude, instead of the Columbia River, forming the northern boundary of the United States.

<sup>88</sup> Correspondence, p. 684.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—Reference to a passage in Carlyle's Past and Present, which had vaguely suggested itself in this connection, reveals the fact that there must have been here a sort of unconscious plagiarism. The passage runs thus: "My ingenuous readers, we will march out of this third book with a rhythmic word of Goethe's on our lips; a word which perhaps has already sung itself, in dark hours and bright, through many a heart. To me, finding it devout yet wholly credible and veritable, full of piety yet free of cant; to me, joyfully finding much in it, and joyfully missing so much in it, this little snatch of music, by the greatest German Man, sounds like a stanza in the grand Road-Song and Marching Song of our great Teutonic Kindred, wending, wending, valiant and victorious, through the undiscovered Deeps of Time! He calls it Mason-Lodge—not Psalm or Hymn:

The Mason's ways are  
A type of Existence,  
And his persistence  
Is as the days are  
Of men in this world.

The Future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us—onward.

And solemn before us,  
Veiled, the dark Portal,  
Goal of all mortal—  
Stars silent rest o'er us,  
Graves under us silent!

While earnest thou gazest,  
Comes boding of terror,  
Comes phantasm and error,  
Perplexes the bravest  
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,  
Heard are the Sages,  
The Worlds and the Ages:  
'Choose well; your choice is  
Brief and yet endless:

'Here eyes do regard you,  
In Eternity's stillness;  
Here is all fulness,  
Ye brave, to reward you;  
Work, and despair not.'"

## CHAPTER X.

### MEXICAN WAR.

Hard on the heels of the Oregon dispute trod the War with Mexico. It was a narrow escape. If the Mexican trouble had developed only a few days earlier, the Oregon compromise would probably have miscarried. To J. E. Calhoun, John C. Calhoun writes, July 2, 1846:

“\* \* \* The settlement of the Oregon question has given great and, I may almost say, universal, satisfaction. It was effected in the nick of time. It is now known that had the English proposition been delayed five days, until the news of our declaration of war against Mexico had arrived, the settlement would not have been made. As it was, there was a division in the British Cabinet on the subject of the offer. How great the folly to endanger the Oregon settlement by the rash, thoughtless and unwarranted movement of our troops to the Del Norte! Your views in reference to that and Slidell's conduct are perfectly correct. Much effort has been made to misrepresent my course in reference to the Mexican war, in order to render it unpopular; but, as far as I can learn, without much success. If I have



lost anything with the thoughtless, I have been more than compensated by the increased hold I have obtained on the reflecting and patriotic.”<sup>89</sup>

“The movement of troops to the Del Norte” has reference to the movement, under orders of the President, Mr. Polk, of General Taylor from Corpus Christi, on the River Nueces, to the Rio Grande del Norte. Mr. Calhoun always considered this the cause of the war, and deemed it a rash and unwarranted act.

In his speech, February 24, 1847, in reply to Mr. Benton, Mr. Calhoun discusses various features of the war and allied topics. The following extract will show that the relations between Mr. Calhoun and his assailant were not very intimate: “But to bring the matter home, the Senator himself is in no small degree responsible for the war. I intend no attack on him. I have made none, and will make none. The relations between him and myself, personal and political, have long been such that self-respect and a sense of propriety forbid my alluding to him, except when unavoidable, and then in a courteous manner; and I now allude to his course only because it is necessary to explain mine, and the motives which governed me on the occasion.”<sup>90</sup>

As to the cause of the war: “Every measure towards the accomplishment of annexation had

<sup>89</sup> Correspondence, p. 698.

<sup>90</sup> Works, IV, p. 378.

been consummated before the present administration came into power. No war followed, although the act of annexation had been completed more than a year before the rupture between us and Mexico took place; nor would war have followed at all had we acted with ordinary prudence. That Mexico was chafed, chagrined; that she threatened much and blustered much; talked about war, and even the existence of hostilities, is all true. It was, however, but talk. The strong should always permit the weak and aggrieved to talk, to bluster, and scold, without taking offense; and if we had so acted, and exercised proper skill in the management of our affairs, Mexico and ourselves would, by this time, have quietly and peaceably settled all difficulties, and been good friends. We have chosen to pursue the opposite course, and are at war.

“Every Senator knows that I was opposed to the war; but none knows but myself the depth of that opposition. With my conceptions of its character and consequences, it was impossible for me to vote for it. When, accordingly, I was deserted by every friend on this side of the House, including my then honorable colleague among the rest (Mr. McDuffie), I was not shaken in the least degree in reference to my course. On the passage of the act recognizing the war, I said to many of my friends that a deed had been done from which the country would not be able to recover for a

long time, if ever; and added, it has dropped a curtain between the present and the future which to me is impenetrable, and for the first time since I have been in public life I am unable to see the future. I also added that it has closed the first volume of our political history under the Constitution and opened the second, and that no mortal could tell what would be written in it. These deep impressions were made upon my mind because I saw from the circumstances under which the war was made a total departure from that course of policy which had governed the country from the commencement of our government until that time; and this, too, under circumstances calculated to lead to most disastrous consequences. Since then less than a year has elapsed, but in that short period enough has already been developed to make what was then said look like prophecy."<sup>91</sup>

The last paragraph is well worth dwelling on. Its content might be unfolded into volumes. Here we have the words of the one man in the country who understood what was occurring. "None but myself knows the depth of that opposition." "It has dropped a curtain." "It has closed the first volume of our political history." It is easier now, after more than fifty years have elapsed, to understand the full significance of these remarks. All his contemporaries were lifted from their feet and carried clear away by the great current of war

<sup>91</sup> Works, IV, p. 370.

feeling; not so he. "For like the hectic in my blood he rages," says Hamlet's uncle. Mr. Calhoun perceived the war—feeling thus "rage like the hectic." He realized that as soon as the war was over the virus of abolitionism would find all too favorable lodgment in the blood so lately heated, and strike to the surface a whole host of malignant symptoms. Truly enough the Mexican War closed the first volume of United States history. Here was the beginning of the end. Soon reason fled from the country's borders; possessed of some devil, the Union fell on those wild delirious days, when its flag was drenched in blood, and the Constitution torn by the blasts of evil passion into a thousand rags and tatters. Here was the end of constitutional rights and protection of minorities. Hence rose triumphant the bloody falsehood of "majority rule" which, lo! these many years, rears its horrid crest over a distracted people. Civil war, with all its dreadful carnage; reconstruction, with all its loathsome outrage and oppression, and, later still, wild saturnalia of plunder, sanctioned with shameless hypocrisy under the highest names that virtue and honor afford; such have been the contents of this volume II. No mortal could foretell the detail, but all too well he realized what would be the general character. And so he opposed the Mexican War, and none but himself knew the depth of that opposition.

When, in spite of his opposition, the war

was under way, he advocated a defensive rather than an offensive policy. He was in favor of holding the country already occupied by military force, that is the country whose western boundary was the Rio Grande, as far up as El Paso, thence westward to the Gulf of California, thence southward to the Pacific. From the Atlantic to El Paso would be the main part requiring defense, for from El Paso to the Gulf of California the arid wildernesses of New Mexico and Arizona, peopled by a few fierce tribes of Indians, would, as shown by history, amply defend itself from any encroachment by Mexicans, and so maintain itself until ready for the influx of the tide of population from the United States.

Mr. Calhoun's speeches in reference to these topics are such as to furnish many a text on the subject of "Imperialism." Indeed, this whole period, on closer inspection, presents to the student so many and such interesting features that it is almost impossible to remain within those bounds beyond which experience inexorably teaches the general reader may not with impunity be conducted.

From a speech, February 9, 1847: "The first and most important of them" (considerations which ought to govern the conduct of the war) "is, that in selecting a defensive line, it should be such as to possess, in the greatest degree, such natural advantages as would require the smallest sacrifice of men and money to defend

it; and among others, such as would afford every facility for drawing promptly supplies of men and provisions from the adjoining country. The next consideration in making the selection is that the country covered by it should be convenient and desirable for us to possess, if in the ultimate adjustment of the difference between us and Mexico it should become the established boundary of the two countries. I go further and add that it should be such as would deprive Mexico in the smallest possible degree of her resources and her strength, for in aiming to do justice to ourselves in establishing the line, we ought, in my opinion, to inflict the least possible amount of injury on Mexico. I hold, indeed, that we ought to be just and liberal to her, not only because she is our neighbor; not only because she is a sister republic; not only because she is emulous now, in the midst of all her difficulties, and has ever been, to imitate our example by establishing a federal republic; not only because she is one of the two greatest powers on this continent of all the States that have grown out of the provinces formerly belonging to Spain and Portugal, though these are high considerations, which every American ought to feel, and which every generous and sympathetic heart would feel, yet there are others which refer more immediately to ourselves. The course of policy which we ought to pursue in regard to Mexico is one of the greatest

problems in our foreign relations. Our true policy, in my opinion, is not to weaken or humble her; on the contrary, it is our interest to see her strong, and respectable, and capable of sustaining all the relations that ought to exist between independent nations. I hold that there is a mysterious connection between the fate of this country and that of Mexico, so much so that her independence and capability of sustaining herself are almost as essential to our prosperity, and the maintenance of our institutions, as they are to hers. Mexico is to us the forbidden fruit; the penalty of eating it would be to subject our institutions to political death."<sup>92</sup>

On January 4, 1848: "After the most mature reflection which I have been able to give to the subject, I am of opinion now, and have been from the first, that the only one by which it\* can be certainly guarded against is to take the question of indemnity into our own hands, to occupy defensively, and hold subject to negotiation, a portion of the territory of Mexico, which we may deem ample to cover all proper claims upon her, and which will be best suited to us to acquire, and least disadvantageous to her to lose. Such was my impression when the message of the President of the United States recommended to Congress the recognition of the existence of a war with Mexico.

<sup>92</sup> Works, IV, p. 306.

\* Danger to our institutions.



My view, at that time, as to the proper course to be pursued was to vote the supplies, to rescue General Taylor and his army from the dangers which surrounded them, and take time to determine whether we should recognize the war or not. Had it been adopted, I would have insisted on raising a provisional army, to be collected at some proper point, and to be trained and disciplined; but to postpone the declaration of war until the Congress of Mexico, in which, according to her Constitution, the war-making power resided, should be allowed time to disavow the intention of making war on us, and to adjust all differences between the two countries. But if she refused, even then I would have advised to seize, by way of reprisal, the portion of her territory which we might select, and hold it defensively, as I have just stated, instead of declaring war formally against her—and that mainly for the purpose of avoiding the very dangers against which these resolutions are intended to guard. But such was the urgency which was supposed then to exist that no time was allowed to present or press these views upon the Senate. Such a course, besides the saving of an immense sacrifice of men and money, and avoiding the many other evils to which the course adopted has already subjected the country, would have effectually prevented our being entangled in the affairs of Mexico, from which we find it now so difficult to extricate our-



selves. This consideration alone gives it decisive advantages over the course adopted, and makes it vastly superior, even if it should involve the same sacrifice of men and money to maintain a defensive line, as would, to use the usual phrase, the vigorous prosecution of the war. Mexico is to us as a dead body, and this is the only way that we can cut the cord which binds us to the corpse."<sup>93</sup>

The resolutions referred to were those in support of which the present speech was delivered:

"Resolved, That to conquer Mexico, and to hold it, either as a province or to incorporate it in the Union, would be inconsistent with the avowed object for which the war has been prosecuted; a departure from the settled policy of the Government; in conflict with its character and genius; and, in the end, subversive of our free and popular institutions.

"Resolved, That no line of policy in the further prosecution of the war should be adopted which may lead to consequences so disastrous."

It will appear from an inspection of the map that the line which Mr. Calhoun recommended be defensively occupied is practically the line finally agreed upon by the treaty. The United States under the treaty paid \$15,000,000.

Such is a partial view of that great series of

<sup>93</sup> Works, IV, p. 419.

events which followed each other in rapid succession—Texas, Oregon, Mexico. The treaty with Mexico was the closing of the third chapter of the series, but that chapter was scarcely closed before another of far deeper import was opened. It was asserted above that to Mr. Calhoun, more than to any other one man, was due the peaceful acquisition of Texas and Oregon, and that, if his counsel had been heeded, the Mexican territory also would have been acquired at no greater pecuniary cost and without the war. Enough has now been presented to substantiate those assertions. It is appropriate that so great a man should have been thus closely connected with the acquisition of so considerable a portion of the territory of his country.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ABOLITIONISM.

To some readers it may appear strange that the present subject has been reserved for so late a stage and elsewhere so lightly touched upon. The arrangement is adopted not without consideration, and not in the least for the purpose of keeping it in the background. It is hoped that the present plan is calculated to show in truer proportions the several features of Mr. Calhoun's career. The current conceptions are utterly inadequate. The fact is that, had there never been a negro in the United States, still Mr. Calhoun's name would have been stamped in characters large and indelible across the page of American history. Indeed, when his various contributions to the world's stock of political knowledge are truly considered, and some conception formed of the numbers of mankind of present and future generations liable to be affected by his doctrines, African slavery, and even the Civil War, vast and dreadful as the latter was, sink to the insignificance of episodes. The theories he has expounded of commerce and finance, above all, the explanations he has left of record of the proper mode of protecting minorities and so

upbuilding society, will, sooner or later, find application to untold millions.

We are told that Columbus, by predicting an eclipse of the sun, easily awed the Indians into complete submission. Prediction of events, to those who are unacquainted with natural laws, appears a miracle. To many a reader of today Mr. Calhoun's predictions as to the results of abolitionism appear little short of miraculous. It is, however, no miracle. He understood. That is the explanation. The correspondence down to details of subsequent history with his forecast, at first glance no less than startling, is thus reduced within natural bounds. Natural as it may thus be accounted, it is none the less significant as an index of the value of his teachings on other subjects. We have his predictions on subjects of wider application and greater moment. It is only from the circumstances of the case that their verification is not so easily rendered complete as in the present instance.

It is a remarkable fact that Mr. Calhoun, at the time of its adoption, thought well of the Missouri Compromise. Jefferson knew otherwise. Those oft-quoted words of his may once again be repeated: "I had for a long time ceased to read newspapers, or pay any attention to public affairs, confident that they were in good hands, and content to be a passenger in our barque to the shore from which I am not far distant. But this momentous question,

like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not the final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper. \* \* \* I regret that I am now to die in the belief that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be that I shall not live to weep over it."<sup>94</sup> It is almost difficult to believe that the date of this utterance is 1820. Jefferson understood. Calhoun at this time had not yet learned. But experience was rapidly teaching him. In 1833 he had learned. Here is an obiter dictum from his reply to Webster in 1833: "For the first time we have heard an ominous reference to a provision in the Constitution which I have never known to be before alluded to in discussion, or in connection with any of our measures. I refer to that provision in the Constitution in which the general government guarantees a republican form of government to the States—a power which

<sup>94</sup> Works, IV, p. 492. Letter Thomas Jefferson to John Holmes.

hereafter, if not rigidly restricted to the objects intended by the Constitution, is destined to be a pretext to interfere with our political affairs and domestic institutions in a manner infinitely more dangerous than any other power which has ever been exercised on the part of the general government. I had supposed that every Southern Senator, at least, would have been awake to the danger which menaces us from this new quarter, and that no sentiment would be uttered on their part calculated to countenance the exercise of this dangerous power. With these impressions, I heard the Senator with amazement alluding to Carolina as furnishing a case which called for the enforcement of this guarantee. Does he not see the hazard of the indefinite extension of so fatal a power? There exists in every Southern State a domestic institution, which would require a far less bold construction to consider the government of every State in that quarter, not to be republican, and, of course, to demand, on the part of this government, the suppression of the institution to which I allude, in fulfilment of the guarantee. I believe there are now no hostile feelings combined with political considerations, in any section, connected with this delicate subject. But it requires no stretch of the imagination to see the danger which must one day come, if not vigilantly watched. With the rapid strides with which this government is advancing to power, a time will come, and that

not far distant, when petitions will be received from the quarter to which I allude for protection—when the faith of the guarantee will be, at least, as applicable to that case as the Senator from Georgia now thinks it is to Carolina. Unless his doctrine be opposed by united and firm resistance, its ultimate effect will be to drive the white population from the Southern Atlantic States.”<sup>95</sup> So far this has only been consummated at certain points on the coast.

In 1836 the question of the reception of abolition petitions came up. Mr. Calhoun was on the alert at the door of the Senate to stamp on the hydra-headed monster at the threshold. His compeers thought him the veriest alarmist. Here are some of his words upon this occasion: “If a petition should be presented praying the abolition of the Constitution (which we are all bound by our oaths to protect), according to this abominable doctrine it must be received. So if it prayed the abolition of the Decalogue, or of the Bible itself. I go further. If the abolition societies should be converted into a body of atheists, and should ask the passage of a law denying the existence of the Almighty Being above us, the Creator of all, according to this blasphemous doctrine we would be bound to receive the petition, to take jurisdiction of it. \* \* \*”<sup>96</sup> “It is a war of religious

<sup>95</sup> Works, II, p. 308.

<sup>96</sup> Works, II, p. 481.

and political fanaticism, mingled, on the part of the leaders, with ambition and the love of notoriety—and waged, not against our lives, but our character. The object is to humble and debase us in our own estimation, and that of the world in general; to blast our reputation, while they overthrow our domestic institutions. This is the mode in which they are attempting abolition, with such ample means and untiring industry; and *now is the time* for all who are opposed to them to meet the attack. How can it be successfully met? This is the important question. There is but one way: we must meet the enemy on the frontier—on the question of receiving; we must secure that important pass; it is our Thermopylæ. The power of resistance, by an universal law of nature, is on the exterior. Break through the shell, penetrate the crust, and there is no resistance within. In the present contest, the question on receiving constitutes our frontier. It is the first, the exterior question, that covers and protects all the others. Let it be penetrated by receiving this petition, and not a point of resistance can be found within, as far as this government is concerned. If we cannot maintain ourselves there, we cannot on any interior position. Of all the questions that can be raised, there is not one on which we can rally on ground more tenable for ourselves, or more untenable for our opponents, not excepting the ultimate question of abolition in the States.



\* \* \* <sup>97</sup> "With these impressions, I ask neither sympathy nor compassion for the slaveholding States. We can take care of ourselves. It is not we, but the Union, which is in danger. It is that which demands our care—demands that the agitation of this question shall cease *here*—that you shall refuse to receive these petitions, and decline all jurisdiction over the subject of abolition, in every form and shape. It is only on these terms that the Union can be safe. We cannot remain here in an endless struggle in defense of our character, our property, and institutions." <sup>98</sup>

The following will illustrate Mr. Calhoun's views, as expounded during the series of years which followed:

December, 1837.—"I fear, said Mr. Calhoun, that the Senate has not elevated its views sufficiently to comprehend the extent and magnitude of the existing danger. It was, perhaps, his misfortune to look too much to the future, and to move against dangers at too great a distance, which had involved him in many difficulties, and exposed him often to the imputation of unworthy motives. \* \* \* He now saw with equal clearness, as clear as the noonday sun, the fatal consequences which must follow if the present disease be not timely arrested. This was the only question of sufficient magnitude and potency to divide this

<sup>97</sup> Works, II, p. 483.

<sup>98</sup> Works, II, p. 489.

Union; and divide it, it would, or drench the country in blood, if not arrested. \* \* \*

“He was not a member of Congress when that compromise” (Missouri) “was made; but it is due to candor to state that his impressions were in its favor; but it is equally due to it to say that, with his present experience and knowledge of the spirit which then, for the first time, began to disclose itself, he had entirely changed in his opinion. He now believed that it was a dangerous measure, and that it had done much to rouse into action the present spirit. Had it then been met with uncompromising opposition, such as a then distinguished and sagacious member from Virginia (Mr. Randolph), now no more, opposed to it, abolition might have been crushed forever in its birth. He then thought of Mr. Randolph as, he doubts not, many think of him now, who have not fully looked into this subject, that he was too unyielding, too uncompromising, too impracticable; but he had been taught his error, and took pleasure in acknowledging it.”<sup>99</sup>

1844.—“He does not, however, deem it irrelevant to state that, if the experience of more than half a century is to decide, it would be neither humane nor wise in them to change their policy. The census and other authentic documents show that, in all instances in which

<sup>99</sup> Works, III, p. 153.

<sup>100</sup> Works, III, p. 185.

the States have changed the former relation between the two races, the condition of the African, instead of being improved, has become worse. They have been invariably sunk into vice and pauperism, accompanied by the bodily and mental inflictions incident thereto—deafness, blindness, insanity, and idiocy—to a degree without example; while, in all other States which have retained the ancient relation between them, they have improved greatly in every respect—in number, comfort, intelligence, and morals—as the following facts, taken from such sources, will serve to illustrate:

“The number of deaf and dumb, blind, idiots, and insane, of the negroes in the States that have changed the ancient relation between the races is 1 out of every 96, while in the States adhering to it it is one out of every 672—that is, 7 to 1 in favor of the latter as compared with the former.

“The number of whites, deaf and dumb, blind, idiots, and insane, in the States that have changed the relation is 1 in every 561, being nearly 6 to 1 against the free blacks in the same States.

“The number of negroes who are deaf and dumb, blind, idiots, and insane, paupers, and in prison in the States that have changed is 1 out of every 6; and in the States that have not, 1 out of every 154, or 22 to 1 against the former, as compared with the latter.

“Taking the two extremes of North and South—in the State of Maine the number of negroes returned as deaf and dumb, blind, insane, and idiots, by the census of 1840, is 1 out of every 12; and in Florida, by the same returns, is 1 out of every 1,105, or 92 to 1 in favor of the slaves of Florida as compared with the free blacks of Maine.

“In addition, it deserves to be remarked that in Massachusetts, where the change in the ancient relation of the two races was first made (now more than sixty years since), where the greatest zeal has been exhibited in their behalf, and where their number is comparatively few (but little more than 8,000 in a population of upwards of 730,000), the condition of the African is amongst the most wretched. By the latest authentic accounts, there was 1 out of every 21 of the black population in jails or houses of correction, and 1 out of every 13 was either deaf and dumb, blind, idiot, insane, or in prison. On the other hand, the census and other authentic information establish the fact that the condition of the African race, throughout all the States where the ancient relation between the two has been retained, enjoys a degree of health and comfort which may well compare with that of the laboring population of any country in Christendom; and it may be added that in no other condition, or in any other age or country, has the negro race

ever attained so high an elevation in morals, intelligence, or civilization.”<sup>101</sup>

February 19, 1847.—“Sir, the day that the balance between the two sections of the country—the slaveholding States and the nonslaveholding States—is destroyed is a day that will not be far removed from political revolution, anarchy, civil war, and widespread disaster. The balance of this system is in the slaveholding States. They are the conservative portion, always have been the conservative portion, always will be the conservative portion, and with a due balance on their part, may, for generations to come, uphold this glorious Union of ours. But if this scheme should be carried out; if we are to be reduced to a handful; if we are to become a mere ball to play the presidential game with, to count something in the Baltimore caucus; if this is to be the result, woe! woe! I say, to this Union.”<sup>102</sup>

Again on the next day: “\* \* \* We know what we are about, we foresee what is coming, and move with no other purpose but to protect our portion of the Union from the greatest of calamities—not insurrection, but something worse. I see the end, if the process is to go on unresisted: it is to expel in time the white population of the Southern States, and leave the blacks in possession.”<sup>103</sup>

June 27, 1848.—“But I go further, and hold

<sup>101</sup> Works, V, p. 337.

<sup>102</sup> Works, IV, p. 343.

<sup>103</sup> Works, IV, p. 360.

that justice and the Constitution are the easiest and safest ground on which the question can be settled, regarded in reference to party. It may be settled on that ground simply by non-action—by leaving the territories free and open to the emigration of all the world, so long as they continue so—and when they become States, to adopt whatever Constitution they please, with the single restriction, to be republican, in order to their admission into the Union. If a party cannot safely take this broad and solid position and successfully maintain it, what other can it take and maintain? If it cannot maintain itself by an appeal to the great principles of justice, the Constitution, and self-government, to what other, sufficiently strong to uphold them in public opinion, can they appeal? I greatly mistake the character of the people of this Union if such an appeal would not prove successful, if either party should have the magnanimity to step forward and boldly make it. It would, in my opinion, be received with shouts of approbation by the patriotic and intelligent in every quarter. There is a deep feeling pervading the country that the Union and our political institutions are in danger, which such a course would dispel, and spread joy over the land.

“Now is the time to take the step, and bring about a result so devoutly to be wished. I have believed from the beginning that this was the only question sufficiently potent to dissolve

the Union, and subvert our system of government; and that the sooner it was met and settled, the safer and better for all. I have never doubted but that, if permitted to progress beyond a certain point, its settlement would become impossible, and am under deep conviction that it is now rapidly approaching it, and that if it is ever to be averted, it must be done speedily. In uttering these opinions, I look to the whole. If I speak earnestly, it is to save and protect all. As deep as is the stake of the South in the Union and our political institutions, it is not deeper than that of the North. We shall be as well prepared and as capable of meeting whatever may come as you.

"Now, let me say, Senators, if our Union and system of government are doomed to perish, and we to share the fate of so many great people who have gone before us, the historian who, in some future day, may record the events ending in so calamitous a result, will devote his first chapter to the ordinance of 1787, lauded as it and its authors have been, as the first of that series which led to it." If anyone wishes to realize the force of this observation, let him read Webster's 7th of March speech, but more especially Mr. Lincoln's Cooper Institute address, the upshot of the logic of which has been said to be that because the *States* themselves (before the Constitution) agreed that slavery should be excluded from the Northwestern territory, therefore



*Congress* (after the Constitution) has the power to exclude slavery from all other territory whatsoever that might thereafter fall to the Union! "His next chapter will be devoted to the Missouri Compromise, and the next to the present agitation. Whether there will be another beyond, I know not. It will depend on what we may do."<sup>104</sup>

August 12, 1849.—"I have now stated my reasons for believing that the abolition agitation will never stop of itself, nor ever will be stopped through the Presidential election, or the action of this government; and that nothing short of the united and fixed determination of the South to maintain her rights at every hazard can stop it. Without this, the end must be emancipation in the worst possible form—far worse than if done by our own voluntary act, instead of being compelled to adopt it at the bidding of a dominant section, whose interest and sympathy for them, and hostility to us, would combine to reverse the present relation between the two races in the South, by raising the inferior to be the favored and superior, and sinking the superior to be the inferior and despised."<sup>105</sup>

Can the record of Reconstruction add a word to this?

Such during the course of sixteen years were Mr. Calhoun's views on this vital question,

<sup>104</sup> Works, IV, p. 506 *et seq.*

<sup>105</sup> Works, IV, p. 529.



clear and consistent; unanswerable then by any voice of reason; incontrovertible now in the light of recorded history. The last great scene of his life remained yet to be enacted. His health was now rapidly failing. Many thought he would be unable to attend the session of Congress. But the South, the Union, was in danger, and once again, in December, 1849, he took his place in the Senate. The dramatic pathos of his last great appearance has been the theme of many pens. The correspondent of the *Charleston Mercury* writes thus from Washington, March 4, 1850: "Mark today with a white spot, for we have had a speech from Mr. Calhoun, and there is but one opinion of it; that is, it is *the* speech of the session. Mr. Calhoun entered the Senate Chamber at half-past twelve. He was accompanied by Gen. James Hamilton. His step, as he came in, seemed almost as firm and elastic as ever, but he looks quite emaciated. The chamber was thronged, although it was known that his speech would be read by another Senator (Mr. Mason, of Virginia). The fact that Mr. Calhoun was to be present was quite sufficient to call together an unusual number of spectators. When the hour arrived, Mr. Calhoun rose and made a few remarks, and then delivered the manuscript copy of his speech to Mr. Mason. The latter had no sooner commenced reading it than the attention of almost every person present was immediately arrested, and the most

perfect silence reigned until he closed. Webster and Clay sat like statues. \* \* \* The true friends of the South were of one mind, and that was that Mr. Calhoun had even outdone all his former efforts. Mr. Calhoun, after his speech was read, was very warmly and cordially congratulated by nearly every Senator. The most interesting spectacle was presented after the Senate adjourned. There was Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, standing together for some time near the Clerk's desk, and conversing about the speech. \* \* \*

Surely it is little to ask of the reader to transport himself in imagination to that scene, and once again, in sympathy with the audience so called back from the tombs to listen to the words of the death-stricken Senator, as they fall from the lips of Senator Mason:

"I have, Senators, believed from the first that the agitation of the subject of slavery would, if not prevented by some timely and effective measure, end in disunion. Entertaining this opinion, I have, on all proper occasions, endeavored to call the attention of both the two great parties which divide the country to adopt some measure to prevent so great a disaster, but without success. The agitation has been permitted to proceed, with almost no attempt to resist it, until it has reached a point when it can no longer be disguised or denied that the Union is in danger. You have thus had forced upon you the greatest and the gravest

question that can ever come under your consideration—How can the Union be preserved?

“To give a satisfactory answer to this mighty question, it is indispensable to have an accurate and thorough knowledge of the nature and the character of the cause by which the Union is endangered. Without such knowledge it is impossible to pronounce, with any certainty, by what measure it can be saved, just as it would be impossible for a physician to pronounce, in the case of some dangerous disease, with any certainty, by what remedy the patient could be saved, without similar knowledge of the nature and character of the cause which produced it. The first question, then, presented for consideration in the investigation I propose to make, in order to obtain such knowledge is—What is it that has endangered the Union?

“To this question there can be but one answer—that the immediate cause is the almost universal discontent which pervades all the States composing the Southern section of the Union. This widely-extended discontent is not of recent origin. It commenced with the agitation of the slavery question, and has been increasing ever since. The next question, going one step further back is—What has caused this widely diffused and almost universal discontent?

“It is a great mistake to suppose, as is by

some, that it originated with demagogues, who excited the discontent with the intention of aiding their personal advancement, or with the disappointed ambition of certain politicians, who resorted to it as a means of retrieving their fortunes. On the contrary, all the great political influences of the section were arrayed against excitement, and exerted to the utmost to keep the people quiet. The great mass of the people of the South were divided, as in the other section, into Whigs and Democrats. The leaders and the presses of both parties in the South were very solicitous to prevent excitement and to preserve quiet, because it was seen that the effects of the former would necessarily tend to weaken, if not destroy, the political ties which united them with their respective parties in the other section. Those who know the strength of party ties will readily appreciate the immense force which this cause exerted against agitation, and in favor of preserving quiet. But, great as it was, it was not sufficient to prevent the widespread discontent which now pervades the section. No; some cause, far deeper and more powerful than the one supposed, must exist, to account for discontent so wide and deep. The question then recurs—What is the cause of this discontent? It will be found in the belief of the people of the Southern States, as prevalent as the discontent itself, that they cannot remain, as things now are, consistently with honor and

safety, in the Union. The next question to be considered is—What has caused this belief?

“One of the causes is, undoubtedly, to be traced to the long-continued agitation of the slave question on the part of the North, and the many aggressions which they have made on the rights of the South during the time. I will not enumerate them at present, as it will be done hereafter in its proper place.

“There is another lying back of it—with which this is intimately connected—that may be regarded as the great and primary cause. This is to be found in the fact that the equilibrium between the two sections, in the government as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the government put in action, has been destroyed. At that time there was nearly a perfect equilibrium between the two, which afforded ample means to each to protect itself against the aggression of the other; but, as it now stands, one section has the exclusive power of controlling the government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression. To place this subject distinctly before you, I have, Senators, prepared a brief statistical statement, showing the relative weight of the two sections in the government under the first census of 1790 and the last census of 1840.

“According to the former, the population of the United States, including Vermont, Ken-

tucky, and Tennessee, which then were in their incipient condition of becoming States, but were not actually admitted, amounted to 3,929,827. Of this number the Northern States had 1,997,899, and the Southern 1,952,072, making a difference of only 45,827 in favor of the former States. The number of States, including Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee, were sixteen, of which eight, including Vermont, belonged to the Northern section, and eight, including Kentucky and Tennessee, to the Southern, making an equal division of the States between the two sections under the first census. There was a small preponderance in the House of Representatives, and in the Electoral College, in favor of the Northern, owing to the fact that, according to the provisions of the Constitution, in estimating Federal numbers, five slaves count but three; but it was too small to affect sensibly the perfect equilibrium which, with that exception, existed at the time. Such was the equality of the two sections when the States composing them agreed to enter into a Federal Union. Since then the equilibrium between them has been greatly disturbed.

“According to the last census the aggregate population of the United States amounted to 17,063,357, of which the Northern section contained 9,728,920, and the Southern 7,334,437, making a difference, in round numbers, of 2,400,000. The number of States had in-

creased from sixteen to twenty-six, making an addition of ten States. In the meantime the position of Delaware had become doubtful as to which section she properly belonged. Considering her as neutral, the Northern States will have thirteen and the Southern States twelve, making a difference in the Senate of two Senators in favor of the former. According to the apportionment under the census of 1840, there were two hundred and twenty-three members of the House of Representatives, of which the Northern States had one hundred and thirty-five, and the Southern States (considering Delaware as neutral), eighty-seven, making a difference in favor of the former in the House of Representatives of forty-eight. The difference in the Senate of two members, added to this, gives to the North, in the electoral college, a majority of fifty. Since the census of 1840, four States have been added to the Union—Iowa, Wisconsin, Florida, and Texas. They leave the difference in the Senate as it stood when the census was taken; but add two to the side of the North in the House, making the present majority in the House in its favor fifty, and in the electoral college, fifty-two.

“The result of the whole is to give the Northern section a predominance in every department of the government, and thereby concentrate in it the two elements which constitute the Federal government—majority of States,



and a majority of their population, estimated in Federal numbers. Whatever section concentrates the two in itself possesses the control of the entire government.

“But we are just at the close of the sixth decade, and the commencement of the seventh. The census is to be taken this year, which must add greatly to the decided preponderance of the North in the House of Representatives and in the electoral college. The prospect is, also, that a great increase will be added to its present preponderance in the Senate during the period of the decade, by the addition of new States. Two Territories, Oregon and Minnesota, are already in progress, and strenuous efforts are making to bring in three additional States from the territory recently conquered from Mexico, which, if successful, will add three other States in a short time to the Northern section, making five States, and increasing the present number of its States from fifteen to twenty, and of its Senators from thirty to forty. On the contrary, there is not a single territory in progress in the Southern section, and no certainty that any additional State will be added to it during the decade. The prospect, then, is that the two sections in the Senate, should the efforts now made to exclude the South from the newly acquired territories succeed, will stand, before the end of the decade, twenty Northern States to fourteen Southern (considering Delaware as neutral),



and forty Northern Senators to twenty-eight Southern. This great increase of Senators, added to the great increase of members of the House of Representatives and the electoral college on the part of the North, which must take place under the next decade, will effectually and irretrievably destroy the equilibrium which existed when the government commenced.

“Had this destruction been the operation of time, without the interference of the government, the South would have had no reason to complain; but such was not the fact. It was caused by the legislation of this government, which was appointed as the common agent of all, and charged with the protection of the interests and security of all. The legislation by which it has been effected may be classed under three heads. The first is that series of acts by which the South has been excluded from the common territory belonging to all the States as members of the Federal Union, which have had the effect of extending vastly the portion allotted to the Northern section, and restricting within narrow limits the portion left the South. The next consists in adopting a system of revenue and disbursements, by which an undue proportion of the burden of taxation has been imposed upon the South, and an undue proportion of its proceeds appropriated to the North; and the last is a system of political measures by which the original character of the govern-

ment has been radically changed. I propose to bestow upon each of these, in the order they stand, a few remarks, with the view of showing that it is owing to the action of this government that the equilibrium between the two sections has been destroyed and the whole powers of the system centered in a sectional majority.

“The first of the series of acts by which the South was deprived of its due share of the territories originated with the confederacy which preceded the existence of this government. It is to be found in the provision of the ordinance of 1787. Its effect was to exclude the South entirely from that vast and fertile region which lies between the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, now embracing five States and one Territory. The next of the series is the Missouri Compromise, which excluded the South from that large portion of Louisiana which lies north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , excepting what is included in the State of Missouri. The last of the series excluded the South from the whole of the Oregon Territory. All these, in the slang of the day, were what are called slave Territories, and not free soil; that is, Territories belonging to slaveholding powers and open to the emigration of masters with their slaves. By these several acts, the South was excluded from 1,238,025 square miles—an extent of country considerably exceeding the entire valley of the Mississippi. To the South was left the portion of the Territory of Louisiana lying south of  $36^{\circ}$

30' and the portion north of it included in the State of Missouri, with the portion lying south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , including the States of Louisiana and Arkansas, and the territory lying west of the latter, and south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , called the Indian country. These, with the Territory of Florida, now the State, make, in the whole, 283,503 square miles. To this must be added the territory acquired with Texas. If the whole should be added to the Southern section, it would make an increase of 325,520, which would make the whole left to the South 609,023. But a large part of Texas is still in contest between the two sections, which leaves it uncertain what will be the real extent of the portion of territory that may be left to the South.

"I have not included the territory recently acquired by the treaty with Mexico. The North is making the most strenuous efforts to appropriate the whole to herself, by excluding the South from every foot of it. If she should succeed, it will add to that from which the South has already been excluded 526,078 square miles, and would increase the whole which the North has appropriated to herself to 1,764,023, not including the portion that she may succeed in excluding us from in Texas. To sum up the whole, the United States, since they declared their independence, have acquired 2,373,046 square miles of territory, from which the North will have excluded the

South, if she should succeed in monopolizing the newly acquired territories, about three-fourths of the whole, leaving to the South but about one-fourth.

“Such is the first and great cause that has destroyed the equilibrium between the two sections in the government.

“The next is the system of revenue and disbursements which has been adopted by the government. It is well known that the government has derived its revenue mainly from duties on imports. I shall not undertake to show that such duties must necessarily fall mainly on the exporting States, and that the South, as the great exporting portion of the Union, has in reality paid vastly more than her due proportion of the revenue, because I deem it unnecessary, as the subject has on so many occasions been fully discussed. Nor shall I, for the same reason, undertake to show that a far greater portion of the revenue has been disbursed at the North than its due share, and that the joint effect of these causes has been to transfer a vast amount from South to North which, under an equal system of revenue and disbursements, would not have been lost to her. If to this be added that many of the duties were imposed, not for revenue but for protection—that is, intended to put money, not in the treasury but directly into the pocket of the manufacturers—some conception may be formed of the immense amount which, in the

long course of sixty years, has been transferred from South to North. There are no data by which it can be estimated with any certainty; but it is safe to say that it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars. Under the most moderate estimate, it would be sufficient to add greatly to the wealth of the North, and thus greatly increase her population by attracting emigration from all quarters to that section.

“This, combined with the great primary cause, amply explains why the North has acquired a preponderance in every department of the government by its disproportionate increase of population and States. The former, as has been shown, has increased, in fifty years, 2,400,000 over that of the South. This increase of population, during so long a period, is satisfactorily accounted for by the number of emigrants, and the increase of their descendants, which have been attracted to the Northern section from Europe and the South, in consequence of the advantages derived from the causes assigned. If they had not existed—if the South had retained all the capital which has been extracted from her by the fiscal action of the government; and, if it had not been excluded by the ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise from the region lying between the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, and between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ —it scarcely admits of a doubt that it would have divided the emigra-

tion with the North, and by retaining her own people, would have at least equaled the North in population under the census of 1840, and probably under that about to be taken. She would also, if she had retained her equal rights in those territories, have maintained an equality in the number of States with the North, and have preserved the equilibrium between the two sections that existed at the commencement of the government. The loss, then, of the equilibrium is to be attributed to the action of this government.

“But while these measures were destroying the equilibrium between the two sections, the action of the government was leading to a radical change in its character, by concentrating all the power of the system in itself. The occasion will not permit me to trace the measures by which this great change has been consummated. If it did, it would not be difficult to show that the process commenced at an early period of the government, and that it proceeded, almost without interruption, step by step, until it absorbed virtually its entire powers; but without going through the whole process to establish the fact, it may be done satisfactorily by a very short statement.

“That the government claims, and practically maintains, the right to decide in the last resort, as to the extent of its powers, will scarcely be denied by any one conversant with the political history of the country. That it

also claims the right to resort to force to maintain whatever power it claims, against all opposition, is equally certain. Indeed, it is apparent, from what we daily hear, that this has become the prevailing and fixed opinion of a great majority of the community. Now, I ask, what limitation can possibly be placed upon the powers of a government claiming and exercising such rights? And, if none can be, how can the separate governments of the States maintain and protect the powers reserved to them by the Constitution, or the people of the several States maintain those which are reserved to them, and, among others, the sovereign powers by which they ordained and established not only their separate State Constitutions and governments, but also the Constitution and government of the United States? But, if they have no constitutional means of maintaining them against the right claimed by this government, it necessarily follows that they hold them at its pleasure and discretion, and that all the powers of the system are in reality concentrated in it. It also follows that the character of the government has been changed in consequence from a federal republic, as it originally came from the hands of its framers, into a great national consolidated democracy. It has indeed, at present, all the characteristics of the latter, and not one of the former, although it still retains its outward form.



“The result of the whole of these causes combined is that the North has acquired a decided ascendancy over every department of this government, and through it a control over all the powers of the system. A single section, governed by the will of the numerical majority, has now, in fact, the control of the government and the entire powers of the system. What was once a constitutional federal republic is now converted, in reality, into one as absolute as that of the autocrat of Russia and as despotic in its tendency as any absolute government that ever existed.

“As, then, the North has the absolute control over the government, it is manifest that on all questions between it and the South where there is a diversity of interests, the interest of the latter will be sacrificed to the former, however oppressive the effects may be, as the South possesses no means by which it can resist, through the action of the government. But if there was no question of vital importance to the South, in reference to which there was a diversity of views between the two sections, this state of things might be endured, without the hazard of destruction to the South. But such is not the fact. There is a question of vital importance to the Southern section in reference to which the views and feelings of the two sections are as opposite and hostile as they can possibly be.

“I refer to the relation between the two races



in the Southern section, which constitutes a vital portion of her social organization. Every portion of the North entertains views and feelings more or less hostile to it. Those most opposed and hostile regard it as a sin, and consider themselves under the most sacred obligation to use every effort to destroy it. Indeed, to the extent that they conceive they have power, they regard themselves as implicated in the sin, and responsible for not suppressing it by the use of all and every means. Those less opposed and hostile regard it as a crime, an offense against humanity, as they call it, and, although not so fanatical, feel themselves bound to use all efforts to effect the same object; while those who are least opposed and hostile regard it as a blot and a stain on the character of what they call the nation, and feel themselves accordingly bound to give it no countenance or support. On the contrary, the Southern section regards the relation as one which cannot be destroyed without subjecting the two races to the greatest calamity, and the section to poverty, desolation, and wretchedness, and accordingly they feel bound, by every consideration of interest and safety, to defend it.

“This hostile feeling on the part of the North towards the social organization of the South long lay dormant, but it only required some cause to act on those who felt most intensely that they were responsible for its con-

tinuance to call it into action. The increasing power of this government, and of the control of the Northern section over all its departments, furnished the cause. It was this which made an impression on the minds of many, that there was little or no restraint to prevent the government from doing whatever it might choose to do. This was sufficient of itself to put the most fanatical portion of the North in action, for the purpose of destroying the existing relation between the two races in the South.

"The first organized movement towards it commenced in 1835. Then, for the first time, societies were organized, presses established, lecturers sent forth to excite the people of the North, and incendiary publications scattered over the whole South, through the mail. The South was thoroughly aroused. Meetings were held everywhere, and resolutions adopted, calling upon the North to apply a remedy to arrest the threatened evil, and pledging themselves to adopt measures for their own protection, if it was not arrested. At the meeting of Congress, petitions poured in from the North, calling upon Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and to prohibit what they called the internal slave trade between the States, announcing at the same time that their ultimate object was to abolish slavery, not only in the District, but in the States and throughout the Union. At this

period, the number engaged in the agitation was small, and possessed little or no personal influence.

“Neither party in Congress had, at that time, any sympathy with them or their cause. The members of each party presented their petitions with great reluctance. Nevertheless, small and contemptible as the party then was, both of the great parties of the North dreaded them. They felt that, though small, they were organized in reference to a subject which had a great and a commanding influence over the Northern mind. Each party, on that account, feared to oppose their petitions, lest the opposite party should take advantage of the one who might do so, by favoring them. The effect was that both united in insisting that the petitions should be received, and that Congress should take jurisdiction over the subject. To justify their course, they took the extraordinary ground that Congress was bound to receive petitions on every subject, however objectionable they might be, and whether they had, or had not, jurisdiction over the subject. These views prevailed in the House of Representatives, and partially in the Senate; and thus the party succeeded in their first movements in gaining what they proposed—a position in Congress, from which agitation could be extended over the whole Union. This was the commencement of the agitation, which has ever since continued, and which, as is now ac-

knowledge, has endangered the Union itself.

“As for myself, I believed at that early period, if the party who got up the petitions should succeed in getting Congress to take jurisdiction, that agitation would follow, and that it would in the end, if not arrested, destroy the Union. I then so expressed myself in debate, and called upon both parties to take grounds against assuming jurisdiction; but in vain. Had my voice been heeded, and had Congress refused to take jurisdiction, by the united votes of all parties, the agitation which followed would have been prevented, and the fanatical zeal that gives impulse to the agitation, and which has brought us to our present perilous condition, would have become extinguished, from the want of fuel to feed the flame. *That* was the time for the North to have shown her devotion to the Union; but, unfortunately, both of the great parties of that section were so intent on obtaining or retaining party ascendancy that all other considerations were overlooked or forgotten.

“What has since followed are but natural consequences. With the success of their first movement, this small fanatical party began to acquire strength, and with that, to become an object of courtship to both the great parties. The necessary consequence was a further increase of power, and a gradual tainting of the opinions of both of the other parties with their doctrines, until the infection has extended over

both; and the great mass of the population of the North, who, whatever may be their opinion of the original abolition party, which still preserves its distinctive organization, hardly ever fail, when it comes to acting, to coöperate in carrying out their measures. With the increase of their influence, they extended the sphere of their action. In a short time after the commencement of their first movement, they had acquired sufficient influence to induce the Legislatures of most of the Northern States to pass acts, which in effect abrogated the clause of the Constitution that provides for the delivery up of fugitive slaves. Not long after, petitions followed to abolish slavery in forts, magazines, and dockyards, and all other places where Congress had exclusive power of legislation. This was followed by petitions and resolutions of Legislatures of the Northern States, and popular meetings, to exclude the Southern States from all territories acquired, or to be acquired, and to prevent the admission of any State hereafter into the Union which, by its Constitution, does not prohibit slavery. And Congress is invoked to do all this, expressly with the view to the final abolition of slavery in the States. That has been avowed to be the ultimate object from the beginning of the agitation until the present time, and yet the great body of both parties of the North, with the full knowledge of the fact, although disavowing the abolitionists, have

coöperated with them in almost all their measures.

“Such is a brief history of the agitation, as far as it has yet advanced. Now, I ask, Senators, what is there to prevent its further progress until it fulfils the ultimate end proposed, unless some decisive measure should be adopted to prevent it? Has any one of the causes which has added to its increase from its original small and contemptible beginning until it has attained its present magnitude diminished in force? Is the original cause of the movement—that slavery is a sin, and ought to be suppressed—weaker now than at the commencement? Or is the abolition party less numerous or influential, or have they less influence with, or control over, the two great parties of the North in elections? Or has the South greater means of influencing or controlling the movements of this government now than it had when the agitation commenced? To all these questions but one answer can be given—no; no; no. The very reverse is true. Instead of being weaker, all the elements in favor of agitation are stronger now than they were in 1835, when it first commenced, while all the elements of influence on the part of the South are weaker. Unless something decisive is done, I again ask, what is to stop this agitation before the great and final object at which it aims—the abolition of slavery in the States—is consummated? Is it,

then, not certain that if something is not done to arrest it, the South will be forced to choose between abolition and secession? Indeed, as events are now moving, it will not require the South to secede, in order to dissolve the Union. Agitation will of itself effect it, of which its past history furnishes abundant proof, as I shall next proceed to show.

“It is a great mistake to suppose that disunion can be effected by a single blow. The cords which bound these States together in one common Union are far too numerous and powerful for that. Disunion must be the work of time. It is only through a long process, and successively, that the cords can be snapped, until the whole fabric falls asunder. Already the agitation of the slavery question has snapped some of the most important, and has greatly weakened all the others, as I shall proceed to show.

“The cords that bind the States together are not only many, but various in character. Some are spiritual or ecclesiastical; some political; others social. Some appertain to the benefit conferred by the Union, and others to the feeling of duty and obligation.

“The strongest of those of a spiritual and ecclesiastical nature consisted in the unity of the great religious denominations, all of which originally embraced the whole Union. All these denominations, with the exception, perhaps, of the Catholics, were organized very

much upon the principle of our political institutions. Beginning with smaller meetings, corresponding with the political divisions of the country, their organization terminated in one great central assemblage, corresponding very much with the character of Congress. At these meetings the principal clergymen and lay members of the respective denominations, from all parts of the Union, met to transact business relating to their common concerns. It was not confined to what appertained to the doctrines and discipline of the respective denominations, but extended to plans for disseminating the Bible—establishing missions, distributing tracts—and of establishing presses for the publication of tracts, newspapers, and periodicals, with a view of diffusing religious information, and for the support of their respective doctrines and creeds. All this combined contributed greatly to strengthen the bonds of the Union. The ties which held each denomination together formed a strong cord to hold the whole Union together; but, powerful as they were, they have not been able to resist the explosive effect of slavery agitation.

“The first of these cords which snapped, under its explosive force, was that of the powerful Methodist Episcopal Church. The numerous and strong ties which held it together are all broken, and its unity gone. They now form separate churches, and, instead of that feeling of attachment and devotion to the



interests of the whole church which was formerly felt, they are now arrayed into two hostile bodies, engaged in litigation about what was formerly their common property.

“The next cord that snapped was that of the Baptists, one of the largest and most respectable of the denominations. That of the Presbyterians is not entirely snapped, but some of its strands have given way. That of the Episcopal Church is the only one of the four great Protestant denominations which remains unbroken and entire.

“The strongest cord, of a political character, consists of the many and powerful ties that have held together the two great parties which have, with some modifications, existed from the beginning of the government. They both extended to every portion of the Union, and strongly contributed to hold all its parts together. But this powerful cord has fared no better than the spiritual. It resisted, for a long time, the explosive tendency of the agitation, but has finally snapped under its force—if not entirely, in a great measure. Nor is there one of the remaining cords which has not been greatly weakened. To this extent the Union has already been destroyed by agitation, in the only way it can be, by sundering and weakening the cords which bind it together.

“If the agitation goes on, the same force, acting with increased intensity, as has been

shown, will finally snap every cord, when nothing will be left to hold the States together except force. But, surely, that can with no propriety of language be called a Union when the only means by which the weaker is held connected with the stronger portion is *force*. It may, indeed, keep them connected; but the connection will partake much more of the character of subjugation, on the part of the weaker to the stronger, than the union of free, independent, and sovereign States, in one confederation, as they stood in the early stages of the government, and which only is worthy of the sacred name of Union.

“Having now, Senators, explained what it is that endangers the Union, and traced it to its cause, and explained its nature and character, the question again recurs—How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is by adopting such measures as will satisfy the States belonging to the Southern section, that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. There is, again, only one way by which this can be effected, and that is by removing the causes by which this belief has been produced. Do *this*, and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question, then, is—How can this be done? But before I undertake to answer

this question, I propose to show by what the Union cannot be saved.

"It cannot, then, be saved by eulogies on the Union, however splendid or numerous. The cry of 'Union, Union—the glorious Union!' can no more prevent disunion than the cry of 'Health, health—glorious health!' on the part of the physician can save a patient lying dangerously ill. So long as the Union, instead of being regarded as a protector, is regarded in the opposite character, by not much less than a majority of the States, it will be in vain to attempt to conciliate them by pronouncing eulogies on it.

"Besides, this cry of Union comes commonly from those whom we cannot believe to be sincere. It usually comes from our assailants. But we cannot believe them to be sincere, for if they loved the Union they would necessarily be devoted to the Constitution. It made the Union, and to destroy the Constitution would be to destroy the Union. But the only reliable and certain evidence of devotion to the Constitution is to abstain, on the one hand, from violating it, and to repel, on the other, all attempts to violate it. It is only by faithfully performing these high duties that the Constitution can be preserved, and with it the Union.

"But how stands the profession of devotion to the Union by our assailants, when brought to this test? Have they abstained from vio-

lating the Constitution? Let the many acts passed by the Northern States to set aside and annul the clause of the Constitution providing for the delivery up of fugitive slaves answer. I cite this, not that it is the only instance (for there are many others), but because the violation in this particular is too notorious and palpable to be denied. Again, have they stood forth faithfully to repel violations of the Constitution? Let their course in reference to the agitation of the slavery question, which was commenced and has been carried on for fifteen years, avowedly for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the States—an object all acknowledged to be unconstitutional—answer. Let them show a single instance, during this long period, in which they have denounced the agitators or their attempts to effect what is admitted to be unconstitutional, or a single measure which they have brought forward for that purpose. How can we, with all these facts before us, believe that they are sincere in their profession of devotion to the Union, or avoid believing their profession is but intended to increase the vigor of their assaults and to weaken the force of our resistance?

“Nor can we regard the profession of devotion to the Union, on the part of those who are not our assailants, as sincere, when they pronounce eulogies upon the Union, evidently with the intent of charging us with disunion, without uttering one word of denunciation

against our assailants. If friends of the Union, their course should be to unite with us in repelling these assaults, and denouncing the authors as enemies of the Union. Why they avoid this, and pursue the course they do, it is for them to explain.

“Nor can the Union be saved by invoking the name of the illustrious Southerner whose mortal remains repose on the western bank of the Potomac. He was one of us—a slaveholder and a planter. We have studied his history, and find nothing in it to justify submission to wrong. On the contrary, his great fame rests on the solid foundation that, while he was careful to avoid doing wrong to others, he was prompt and decided in repelling wrong. I trust that, in this respect, we profited by his example.

“Nor can we find anything in his history to deter us from seceding from the Union, should it fail to fulfil the objects for which it was instituted, by being permanently and hopelessly converted into a means of oppressing instead of protecting us. On the contrary, we find much in his example to encourage us, should we be forced to the extremity of deciding between submission and disunion.

“There existed then, as well as now, a union—that between the parent country and her then colonies. It was a union that had much to endear it to the people of the colonies. Under its protecting and superintending care the

colonies were planted, and grew up and prospered, through a long course of years, until they became populous and wealthy. Its benefits were not limited to them. Their extensive agricultural and other productions gave birth to a flourishing commerce, which richly rewarded the parent country for the trouble and expense of establishing and protecting them. Washington was born and grew up to manhood under that union. He acquired his early distinction in its service, and there is every reason to believe that he was devotedly attached to it. But his devotion was a rational one. He was attached to it, not as an end, but as a means to an end. When it failed to fulfil its end and, instead of affording protection, was converted into the means of oppressing the colonies, he did not hesitate to draw his sword and head the great movement by which that union was forever severed, and the independence of these States established. This was the great and crowning glory of his life, which has spread his fame over the whole globe, and will transmit it to the latest posterity.

“Nor can the plan proposed by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, nor that of the administration, save the Union. I shall pass by, without remark, the plan proposed by the Senator and proceed directly to the consideration of that of the administration. I, however, assure the distinguished and able Senator that, in taking this course, no dis-

respect whatever is intended to him or his plan. I have adopted it because so many Senators of distinguished abilities, who were present when he delivered his speech, and explained his plan, and who were fully capable to do justice to the side they support, have replied to him.

“The plan of the administration cannot save the Union, because it can have no effect whatever towards satisfying the States composing the Southern section of the Union that they can, consistently with safety and honor, remain in the Union. It is, in fact, but a modification of the Wilmot Proviso. It proposes to effect the same object—to exclude the South from all territory acquired by the Mexican treaty. It is well known that the South is united against the Wilmot Proviso, and has committed itself, by solemn resolutions, to resist should it be adopted. Its opposition is *not to the name*, but that which it *proposes to effect*. That, the Southern States hold to be unconstitutional, unjust, inconsistent with their equality as members of the common Union, and calculated to destroy irretrievably the equilibrium between the two sections. These objections equally apply to what, for brevity, I will call the Executive Proviso. There is no difference between it and the Wilmot, except in the mode of effecting the object, and in that respect I must say that the latter is much the least objectionable. It goes to its object openly, boldly, distinctly. It claims for Con-



gress unlimited power over the Territories, and proposes to assert it over the Territories acquired from Mexico, by a positive prohibition of slavery. Not so the Executive Proviso. It takes an indirect course, and in order to elude the Wilmot Proviso, and thereby avoid encountering the united and determined resistance of the South, it denies, by implication, the authority of Congress to legislate for the Territories, and claims the right as belonging exclusively to the inhabitants of the Territories. But to effect the object of excluding the South, it takes care, in the meantime, to let in emigrants freely from the Northern States and all other quarters, except from the South, which it takes special care to exclude by holding up to them the danger of having their slaves liberated under the Mexican laws. The necessary consequence is to exclude the South from the territory, just as effectually as would the Wilmot Proviso. The only difference in this respect is that what one proposes to effect directly and openly the other proposes to effect indirectly and covertly.

“But the Executive Proviso is more objectionable than the Wilmot in another and more important particular. The latter, to effect its object, inflicts a dangerous wound upon the Constitution, by depriving the Southern States, as joint partners and owners of the Territories, of their rights in them; but it inflicts no greater wound than is absolutely



necessary to effect its object. The former, on the contrary, while it inflicts the same wound, inflicts others equally great, and, if possible, greater, as I shall next proceed to explain.

“In claiming the right for the inhabitants, instead of Congress, to legislate for the Territories, the Executive Proviso assumes that the sovereignty over the Territories is vested in the former; or, to express it in the language used in a resolution offered by one of the Senators from Texas (General Houston, now absent), they have ‘the same inherent right of self-government as the people in the States.’ The assumption is utterly unfounded, unconstitutional, without example, and contrary to the entire practice of the government from its commencement to the present time, as I shall proceed to show.

“The recent movement of individuals in California to form a Constitution and a State government, and to appoint Senators and Representatives, is the first fruit of this monstrous assumption. If the individuals who made this movement had gone into California as adventurers, and if, as such, they had conquered the Territory and established their independence, the sovereignty of the country would have been vested in them, as a separate and independent community. In that case, they would have had the right to form a Constitution, and to establish a government for themselves; and if, afterwards, they thought proper to apply to

Congress for admission into the Union as a sovereign and independent State, all this would have been regular and according to established principles. But such is not the case. It was the United States who conquered California and finally acquired it by treaty. The sovereignty, of course, is vested in them, and not in the individuals who have attempted to form a Constitution and a State without their consent. All this is clear, beyond controversy, unless it can be shown that they have since lost or been divested of their sovereignty.

“Nor is it less clear that the power of legislating over the acquired territory is vested in Congress, and not, as is assumed, in the inhabitants of the Territories. None can deny that the government of the United States has the power to acquire Territories, either by war or treaty; but if the power to acquire exists, it belongs to Congress to carry it into execution. On this point there can be no doubt, for the Constitution expressly provides that Congress shall have power ‘to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper to carry into execution the foregoing powers’ (those vested in Congress), ‘and all other powers vested by this Constitution in *the government* of the United States, or in *any department* or *officer* thereof.’ It matters not, then, where the power is vested, for, if vested at all in the government of the United States, or any of its departments, or officers, the power of carrying it

into execution is clearly vested in Congress. But this important provision, while it gives to Congress the power of legislating over Territories, imposes important limitations on its exercise, by restricting Congress to passing laws necessary and proper for carrying the power into execution. The prohibition extends not only to all laws not suitable or appropriate to the object of the power, but also to all that are unjust, unequal, or unfair—for all such laws would be unnecessary and improper, and, therefore, unconstitutional.

“Having now established beyond controversy that the sovereignty over the Territories is vested in the United States—that is, in the several States composing the Union—and that the power of legislating over them is expressly vested in Congress, it follows that the individuals in California who have undertaken to form a Constitution and a State, and to exercise the power of legislating without the consent of Congress, have usurped the sovereignty of the State and the authority of Congress, and have acted in open defiance of both. In other words, what they have done is revolutionary and rebellious in its character, anarchical in its tendency, and calculated to lead to the most dangerous consequences. Had they acted from premeditation and design, it would have been, in fact, actual rebellion; but such is not the case. The blame lies much less upon them than upon those who have induced them to take

a course so unconstitutional and dangerous. They have been lead into it by language held here, and the course pursued by the executive branch of the government.

“I have not seen the answer of the Executive to the calls made by the two Houses of Congress for information as to the course which it took, or the part which it acted, in reference to what was done in California. I understand the answers have not yet been printed. But there is enough known to justify the assertion that those who profess to represent and act under the authority of the Executive have advised, aided, and encouraged the movement which terminated in forming what they call a Constitution and a State. General Riley, who professed to act as Civil Governor, called the convention, determined on the number and distribution of the delegates, appointed the time and place of its meeting, was present during the session, and gave its proceedings his approbation and sanction. If he acted without authority, he ought to have been tried, or at least reprimanded, and his course disavowed. Neither having been done, the presumption is that his course has been approved. This, of itself, is sufficient to identify the Executive with his acts, and to make it responsible for them. I touch not the question whether General Riley was appointed or received the instructions under which he professed to act from the present Executive or its predecessor.

If from the former, it would implicate the preceding, as well as the present administration. If not, the responsibility rests exclusively on the present.

“It is manifest from this statement that the Executive Department has undertaken to perform acts preparatory to the meeting of the individuals to form their so-called Constitution and government, which appertain exclusively to Congress. Indeed, they are identical in many respects with the provisions adopted by Congress when it gives permission to a Territory to form a Constitution and government, in order to be admitted as a State into the Union.

“Having now shown that the assumption upon which the Executive, and the individuals in California, acted throughout this whole affair is unfounded, unconstitutional, and dangerous, it remains to make a few remarks, in order to show that what has been done is contrary to the entire practice of the government from the commencement to the present time.

“From its commencement until the time that Michigan was admitted, the practice was uniform. Territorial governments were first organized by Congress. The government of the United States appointed the governors, judges, secretaries, marshals, and other officers, and the inhabitants of the Territory were represented by legislative bodies, whose acts were subject to the revision of Congress. This state

of things continued until the government of a Territory applied to Congress to permit its inhabitants to form a Constitution and government, preparatory to admission into the Union. The act preliminary to giving permission was to ascertain whether the inhabitants were sufficiently numerous to authorize them to be formed into a State. This was done by taking a census. That being done, and the number proving sufficient, permission was granted. The act granting it fixed all the preliminaries—the time and place of holding the convention, the qualification of the voters, establishment of its boundaries, and all other measures necessary to be settled previous to admission. The act giving permission necessarily withdraws the sovereignty of the United States, and leaves the inhabitants of the incipient State as free to form their Constitution and government as were the original States of the Union after they had declared their independence. At this stage the inhabitants of the Territory became, for the first time, a people, in legal and Constitutional language. Prior to this they were, by the old Acts of Congress, called inhabitants, and not people. All this is perfectly consistent with the sovereignty of the United States, with the powers of Congress, and with the right of a people to self-government.

“Michigan was the first case in which there was any departure from the uniform rule of

acting. Hers was a very slight departure from established usage. The ordinance of 1787 secured to her the right of becoming a State when she should have 60,000 inhabitants. Owing to some neglect, Congress delayed taking the census. In the meantime her population increased, until it clearly exceeded more than twice the number which entitled her to admission. At this stage, she formed a Constitution and government, without a census being taken by the United States, and Congress waived the omission, as there was no doubt she had more than a sufficient number to entitle her to admission. She was not admitted at the first session she applied, owing to some difficulty respecting the boundary between her and Ohio. The great irregularity as to her admission took place at the next session, but on a point which can have no possible connection with the case of California.

“The irregularities in all other cases that have since occurred are of a similar nature. In all there existed territorial governments established by Congress, with officers appointed by the United States. In all the territorial government took the lead in calling conventions, and fixing the preliminaries preparatory to the formation of a Constitution and admission into the Union. They all recognized the sovereignty of the United States, and the authority of Congress over the Territories; and wherever there was any departure from

established usage, it was done on the presumed consent of Congress, and not in defiance of its authority, or the sovereignty of the United States over the Territories. In this respect California stands alone, without usage or a single example to cover her case.

“It belongs now, Senators, to you to decide what part you will act in reference to this unprecedented transaction. The Executive has laid the paper purporting to be the Constitution of California before you, and asks you to admit her into the Union as a State; and the question is, will you or will you not admit her? It is a grave question, and there rests upon you a heavy responsibility. Much, very much, will depend upon your decision. If you admit her, you indorse and give your sanction to all that has been done. Are you prepared to do so? Are you prepared to surrender your power of legislation for the Territories—a power expressly vested in Congress by the Constitution, as has been fully established? Can you, consistently with your oath to support the Constitution, surrender the power? Are you prepared to admit that the inhabitants of the Territories possess the sovereignty over them, and that any number, more or less, may claim any extent of the Territory they please; may form a Constitution and government, and erect it into a State, without asking your permission? Are you prepared to surrender the sovereignty of the United States over whatever territory may



be hereafter acquired to the first adventurers who may rush into it? Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department all the powers which you have heretofore exercised over the Territories? If not, how can you, consistently with your duty and your oaths to support the Constitution, give your assent to the admission of California as a State, under a pretended Constitution and government? Again, can you believe that the project of a Constitution which they have adopted has the least validity? Can you believe that there is such a State in reality as the State of California? No; there is no such State. It has no legal or Constitutional existence. It has no validity, and can have none without your sanction. How, then, can you admit it as a *State* when, according to the provisions of the Constitution, your power is limited to admitting new *States*? To be admitted, it must be a State, and an existing State, independent of your sanction, before you can admit it. When you give your permission to the inhabitants of a Territory to form a Constitution and a State, the Constitution and State they form derive their authority from the people, and not from you. The State, before it is admitted, is actually a State, and does not become so by the *act of admission*, as would be the case with California should you admit her contrary to the Constitutional provisions and established usage heretofore.

“The Senators on the other side of the chamber must permit me to make a few remarks in this connection particularly applicable to them—with the exception of a few Senators from the South, sitting on the other side of the chamber. When the Oregon question was before this body, not two years since, you took (if I mistake not) universally the ground that Congress had the sole and absolute power of legislating for the Territories. How, then, can you now, after the short interval which has elapsed, abandon the ground which you took, and thereby virtually admit that the power of legislating, instead of being in Congress, is in the inhabitants of the Territories? How can you justify and sanction by your votes the acts of the Executive which are in direct derogation of what you then contended for? But to approach still nearer to the present time, how can you, after condemning, little more than a year since, the grounds taken by the party which you defeated at the last election, wheel round and support by your votes the grounds which, as explained recently on this floor by the candidate of the party in the last election, are identical with those on which the Executive has acted in reference to California? What are we to understand by all this? Must we conclude that there is no sincerity, no faith, in the acts and declarations of public men, and that all is mere acting or hollow profession? Or

are we to conclude that the exclusion of the South from the territory acquired from Mexico is an object of so paramount a character in your estimation that right, justice, Constitution, and consistency must all yield when they stand in the way of our exclusion?

“But, it may be asked, what is to be done with California, should she not be admitted? I answer, remand her back to the territorial condition, as was done in the case of Tennessee, in the early stage of the government. Congress, in her case, had established a territorial government in the usual form, with a governor, judges, and other officers, appointed by the United States. She was entitled, under the deed of cession, to be admitted into the Union as a State as soon as she had 60,000 inhabitants. The territorial government, believing it had that number, took a census, by which it appeared it exceeded it. She then formed a Constitution, and applied for admission. Congress refused to admit her, on the ground that the census should be taken by the United States, and that Congress had not determined whether the Territory should be formed into one or two States, as it was authorized to do under the cession. She returned quietly to her territorial condition. An act was passed to take a census by the United States, containing a provision that the Territory should form one State. All afterwards was regularly conducted, and the Territory admitted as a State

in due form. The irregularities in the case of California are immeasurably greater, and offer much stronger reasons for pursuing the same course. But, it may be said, California may not submit. That is not probable; but if she should not, when she refuses it will then be time for us to decide what is to be done.

“Having now shown what cannot save the Union, I return to the question with which I commenced—How can the Union be saved? There is but one way by which it can with any certainty, and that is by a full and final settlement, on the principle of justice, of all the questions at issue between the two sections. The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution, and no concession or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, and remove all cause of discontent; by satisfying the South, she could remain honorably and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the questions at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

“But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can of itself do nothing—not even protect itself—but by the stronger.

The North has only to will it to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled, to cease the agitation of the slave question, and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South, in substance, the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of the government. There will be no difficulty in devising such a provision—one that will protect the South and which, at the same time, will improve and strengthen the government, instead of impairing and weakening it.

“But will the North agree to this? It is for her to answer the question. But, I will say, she cannot refuse if she has half the love of the Union which she professes to have, or without justly exposing herself to the charge that her love of power and aggrandizement is far greater than her love of the Union. At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union rests on the North, and not on the South. The South cannot save it by any act of hers, and the North may save it without any sacrifice whatever, unless to do justice, and to perform her duties under the Constitution, should be regarded by her as a sacrifice.

“It is time, Senators, that there should be

an open and manly avowal on all sides as to what is intended to be done. If the question is not now settled, it is uncertain whether it ever can hereafter be; and we, as the representatives of the States of this Union, regarded as governments, should come to a distinct understanding as to our respective views, in order to ascertain whether the great questions at issue can be settled or not. If you who represent the stronger portion cannot agree to settle them on the broad principle of justice and duty, say so; and let the States we both represent agree to separate and part in peace. If you are unwilling we should part in peace, tell us so, and we shall know what to do when you reduce the question to submission or resistance. If you remain silent, you will compel us to infer by your acts what you intend. In that case, California will become the test question. If you admit her, under all the difficulties that oppose her admission, you compel us to infer that you intend to exclude us from the whole of the acquired territories, with the intention of destroying irretrievably the equilibrium between the two sections. We would be blind not to perceive in that case that your real objects are power and aggrandizement, and infatuated not to act accordingly.

“I have now, Senators, done my duty in expressing my opinions fully, freely, and candidly on this solemn occasion. In doing so, I have been governed by the motives which have

governed me in all the stages of the agitation of the slavery question since its commencement. I have exerted myself, during the whole period, to arrest it, with the intention of saving the Union, if it could be done, and if it could not, to save the section where it has pleased Providence to cast my lot, and which I sincerely believe has justice and the Constitution on its side. Having faithfully done my duty to the best of my ability, both to the Union and my section, throughout this agitation, I shall have the consolation, let what will come, that I am free from all responsibility."

The next day Mr. Calhoun became involved in a colloquy with Senate Foote, of Mississippi, which has the effect, in the light of after events, of bringing into high relief the no less than pitiful inadequacy of the views of that Senator. Beside Calhoun, death-stricken though he was, the words of the other are as the babbling of a little child.

It is said that one of Mr. Calhoun's last utterances expressed a fervent wish for "one hour more to speak in the Senate, when I can do more good than on any past occasion in my life." This is doubtless true. His speech was intended merely to break the ground, as the opening of a carefully laid out campaign. It was never even developed what the amendment to the Constitution was to which he referred, and which he purposed to advocate. Probably it was the dual Executive,

which he discusses in the "Treatise on the Constitution." Had such a provision been adopted, and Calhoun and Webster spared to serve the republic as consuls, how differently had flowed the current of events! If Mr. Calhoun himself had but lived a little longer, it seems highly probable that history would have been different. He would certainly have forced matters to a head at this session, and at this time, had the South taken definite action, it seems probable that there was still left genuine love enough for the Union on all sides to save it. To delay ten years was necessarily fatal. Every moment lost but added fresh fuel to the kindling flame of sectional hatred. Mr. Calhoun's death was a stunning blow. The South fell into confusion. Delay resulted, and natural causes, taking their course, produced their natural results.



## CHAPTER XII.

### “THE REST IS SILENCE.”

“But, sir, I propose to say something of him in his last days. Early in the winter of 1848-49, his failing health gave uneasiness to his friends. A severe attack of bronchitis, complicated with an affection of the heart, disqualified him for the performance of his senatorial duties with the punctuality which always distinguished him. It was then that I became intimately acquainted with his mind and, above all, with his heart. Watching by his bedside, and during his recovery, I ceased to be astonished at the power which his master-mind and elevated moral feelings had always exerted upon those who were included within the circle of his social intercourse. It was tribute paid spontaneously to wisdom, genius, truth. Patriotism, honesty of purpose, and purity of motive, rendered active by the energies of such an intellect as hardly ever falls to any man, gathered around him sincere admirers and devoted friends. That many have failed to appreciate the value of the great truths which he uttered, or to listen to the warnings which he gave, is nothing new in the history of great minds. Bacon wrote for posterity, and men of

profound sagacity always think in advance of their generation. His body was sinking under the invasion of disease before I formed his acquaintance, and he was passing from among us before I was honored with his friendship. I witnessed with astonishment the influence of his mighty mind over his weak physical structure. Like a powerful steam engine on a frail bark, every revolution of the wheel tried its capacity for endurance to the utmost. But yet his mind moved on, and, as if insensible to the decay of bodily strength, put forth, without stint, his unequalled powers of thought and analysis until nature well-nigh sunk under the imposition. His intellect preserved its vigor while his body was sinking to decay. The menstruum retained its powers of solution while the frail crucible which contained it was crumbling to atoms. During his late illness, which, with a short intermission, has continued since the commencement of this session of Congress, there was no abatement of his intellectual labors. They were directed as well to the momentous questions now agitating the public mind as to the completion of a work which embodies his thoughts on the subject of government in general and our own Constitution in particular, thus distinguishing his last days by the greatest effort of his mind, and bequeathing it as his richest legacy to posterity.

“Cheerful in a sick chamber, none of the gloom which usually attends the progress of

disease annoyed him. Severe in ascertaining the truth of conclusions, because unwilling to be deceived himself, he scorned to deceive others; skilful in appreciating the past, and impartial in his judgment of the present, he looked to the future as dependent on existing causes, and fearlessly gave utterance to his opinions of its nature and character. The philosopher and the statesman, he discarded expedients by which men 'construe the times to their necessities.' He loved the truth for the truth's sake, and believed that to temporize is but to increase the evil which we seek to remove. The approach of death brought no indication of impatience—no cloud upon his intellect. To a friend who spoke of the time and manner in which it is best to meet death he remarked: 'I have but little concern about either; I desire to die in the discharge of my duty; I have an unshaken reliance upon the providence of God.'

"I saw him four days after his last appearance in the Senate Chamber, gradually sinking under the power of his malady, without one murmur at his affliction, always anxious for the interest of his country, deeply absorbed in the great question which agitates the public mind, and earnestly desiring its honorable adjustment, unchanged in the opinions which he had held and uttered for many years, the ardent friend of the Union and the Constitution, and seeking the perpetuity of our institutions

by inculcating the practice of justice and the duties of patriotism.

“Aggravated symptoms on the day before his death gave notice of his approaching end. I left him late at night with but faint hopes of amendment, and on being summoned early the next morning, I found him sinking in the cold embrace of death, calm, collected, and conscious of his situation, but without any symptom of alarm, his face beaming with intelligence, without one indication of suffering or of pain. I watched his countenance, and the luster of that bright eye remained unchanged until the silver cord was broken, and then it went out in instantaneous eclipse. When I removed my hand from closing his eyes he seemed as one who had fallen into a sweet and refreshing slumber. Thus, sir, closed the days of John Caldwell Calhoun, the illustrious American statesman.”<sup>106</sup>

This chaste and beautiful obituary was pronounced in the House of Representatives by Abram W. Venable, member from North Carolina. Although accredited to that State, Mr. Venable was one of the well-known, keen-minded Virginia family. By reason of his kindly ministrations during the last hours, and his discriminating words of appreciation, he will long retain the admiration and gratitude of Carolinians.

“How touching,” says Carlyle, speaking of

<sup>106</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 36.

the death of Mirabeau, "is the loyalty of men to their sovereign man." At the death of Calhoun, contemporary writers inform us, a solemn hush fell on all the people. Many remark that the effect produced was similar to that at the death of Washington. South Carolinians felt it as a direct personal loss as well as a great public calamity.

Two out of a multitude of tributes may be selected as typifying all the rest. Coming from very different quarters, they contrast highly, but both contribute to the same result.

Mr. Webster, possibly better than any contemporary, was intellectually qualified to appreciate his great compeer. His great power of comprehension was apparently marked by a singular vein of philosophic indolence, a kind of *laissez-faire* liberality. To him, therefore, it is fair to infer, Calhoun seemed little less than a wonderful manifestation, Calhoun's philosophy being galvanized throughout with energy, in such marked contrast to the indolence of his own. It seems that Webster on this occasion was shaken to an unusual degree. He had heard that somber speech of Calhoun's on March 4th and had understood it. Genuine agitation of mind and deep concern for the Union was the mould in which the great 7th of March speech was cast. It seems strange how any one can fail to respond to its appealing note of pathos, sounding in unison with the note given out in Calhoun's speech three days

before. Webster knew that Calhoun's strength was needed to save the Union, and he also knew that Calhoun's strength was at the last ebb. Jefferson Davis, thirty-seven years afterwards, had not forgotten that Webster, in pronouncing the tribute to Calhoun's memory, was more moved than on any other occasion. He says in a letter: "Mr. Webster, who had been his great intellectual opponent, but, nevertheless, his warm personal friend, when speaking on the occasion of his death, manifested deeper emotion than I ever knew him to exhibit on any other occasion. He impressively said: 'Nothing that was selfish or impure ever came near the head or heart of Calhoun.'"<sup>107</sup>

In the Senate, April 1, 1850, Mr. Webster said: "I hope the Senate will indulge me in adding a very few words to what has been said. My apology for this presumption is the very long acquaintance which has subsisted between Mr. Calhoun and myself. We are of the same age. I made my first entrance into the House of Representatives in May, 1813, and there found Mr. Calhoun. He had already been in that body for two or three years. I found him then an active and efficient member of the assembly to which he belonged, taking a decided part, and exercising a decided influence in all its deliberations.

"From that day to the day of his death,

<sup>107</sup> A History of the Calhoun Monument. Lucas Richardson & Co., Charleston, S. C., 1888. p. 118.

amidst all the strifes of party and politics, there has subsisted between us always, and without interruption, a great degree of personal kindness.

“Differing widely on many great questions respecting the institutions and government of the country, those differences never interrupted our personal and social intercourse. I have been present at most of the distinguished instances of the exhibition of his talents in debate. I have always heard him with pleasure, often with much instruction, not unfrequently with the highest degree of admiration.

“Mr. Calhoun was calculated to be a leader in whatsoever association of political friends he was thrown. He was a man of undoubted genius and of commanding talent. All the country and the world admit that. His mind was both perceptive and vigorous. It was clear, quick, and strong.

“Sir, the eloquence of Mr. Calhoun, or the manner of his exhibition of his sentiments in public bodies, was part of his intellectual character. It grew out of the qualities of his mind. It was plain, strong, terse, condensed, concise; sometimes impassioned, still always severe. Rejecting ornament, not often seeking far for illustration, his power consisted in the plainness of his propositions, in the closeness of his logic, and in the earnestness and energy of his manner. These are the qualities, as I think, which have enabled him, through such a long

course of years, to speak often, and yet always command attention. His demeanor as a Senator is known to us all—is appreciated, venerated, by us all. No man was more respectful to others; no man carried himself with greater decorum; no man with superior dignity. I think there is not one of us but felt, when he last addressed us from his seat in the Senate, his form still erect, with a voice by no means indicating such a degree of physical weakness as did in fact possess him, with clear tones and an impressive and, I may say, an imposing manner, who did not feel that he might imagine that we saw before us a Senator of Rome when Rome survived.

“Sir, I have not in public nor in private life known a more assiduous person in the discharge of his appropriate duties. I have known no man who wasted less of life in what is called recreation, or employed less of it in any pursuits not connected with the immediate discharge of his duty. He seemed to have no recreation but the pleasure of conversation with his friends. Out of the chambers of Congress, he was either devoting himself to the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to the immediate subject of the duty before him, or else he was indulging in those social interviews in which he so much delighted.

“My honorable friend from Kentucky has spoken in just terms of his colloquial talents. They certainly were singular and eminent.



There was a charm in his conversation not often found. He delighted especially in conversation and intercourse with young men. I suppose that there has been no man among us who had more winning manners, in such an intercourse and conversation with men comparatively young, than Mr. Calhoun. I believe one great power of his character, in general, was his conversational talent. I believe it is that, as well as a consciousness of his high integrity, and the greatest reverence for his intellect and ability, that has made him so endeared an object to the people of the State to which he belonged.

“Mr. President, he had the basis, the indispensable basis, of all high character—and that was unspotted integrity, unimpeached honor and character. If he had aspirations, they were high, honorable, and noble. There was nothing groveling, or low, or meanly selfish, that came near the head or the heart of Mr. Calhoun. Firm in his purpose, perfectly patriotic and honest as I am sure he was, in the principles that he espoused and in the measures that he defended, aside from that large regard for that species of distinction that conducted him to eminent stations for the benefit of the republic, I do not believe he had a selfish motive or selfish feeling.

“However, sir, he may have differed from others of us in his political opinions, or his political principles, those principles and those

opinions will now descend to posterity under the sanction of a great name. He has lived long enough, he has done enough, and he has done it so well, so successfully, so honorably, as to connect himself for all time with the records of his country. He is now a historical character. Those of us who have known him here will find that he has left upon our minds and our hearts a strong and lasting impression of his person, his character, and his public performances, which, while we live, will never be obliterated. We shall hereafter, I am sure, indulge in it as a grateful recollection that we have lived in his age; that we have been his contemporaries; that we have seen him, and heard him, and known him. We shall delight to speak of him to those who are rising up to fill our places. And when the time shall come when we ourselves shall go, one after another, in succession, to our graves, we shall carry with us a deep sense of his genius and character, his honor and integrity, his amiable deportment in private life, and the purity of his exalted patriotism.”<sup>108</sup>

These words wear well. The oftener perused, the more appropriate, the more adequate they will be found.

The other tribute selected is anonymous, but, it is deemed, not the less effective on that account. The committee appointed as escort of the remains of Mr. Calhoun, among other

<sup>108</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 10 *et seq.*

things, report: "As we passed a farm near Wilmington, N. C., the owner, an elderly man, stood at the roadside, uncovered, his right hand resting on a small pine, hung with emblems of mourning, with his two servants standing behind him, also uncovered. \* \* \*"<sup>109</sup>

Mr. Calhoun died March 31, 1850. On April 2d, a meeting of citizens was called in Charleston to give expression to the public sorrow. Under one of the resolutions adopted at this meeting Governor Seabrook appointed a committee of twenty-five to proceed to Washington and to escort the remains to Charleston. Mr. Daniel Ravenel was made chairman of the committee, and the melancholy duties which fell to him in that character were discharged with rare tact and delicacy of feeling. Mr. Calhoun's family generously consented that to Charleston should be accorded the very high honor to serve as the final resting place. The Senate appointed a committee of six from their number to act as an escort to South Carolina. With this committee the committee of twenty-five coöperated. Mr. Venable and Mr. Holmes, of South Carolina, had been appointed on behalf of the House of Representatives. On April 22 the cortège started on the journey southward. "These (the several committees, etc.), in a long train of carriages, followed the hearse in slow procession from the steps of the Capitol along the south side of Capitol Hill

<sup>109</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 51.

and down the Maryland avenue, and thence to the wharf on the Potomac, where the steamer Baltimore awaited us.”<sup>110</sup>

The passage by Mount Vernon is thus impressively narrated: “As we drew near, the speed of our boat was moderated. Moving slowly on, we paused, as it were, in silent respect.

“Mount Vernon belongs to history. It commands the attention of every traveler. It associates, throughout the world, the dignity of worth in private life with all that is rational in civil liberty, with all that is wise in government, with all that is pure in the service of country. To us it is sacred ground, impressing every mind with awe, filling every heart with gratitude—an unseen presence is there, and no unhallowed thought finds place. Every packet that passes tolls its bell in honor of the Father of his Country. On this occasion, the customary answer of the heart was wrought into high emotion. We bore what was mortal of one illustrious man by all that is mortal of the great type of illustrious men. No bosom was unmoved; scarcely an eye was tearless. ‘Deep called unto deep’ as the muffled knell of our boat paid its passing tribute.”<sup>111</sup>

Further extracts from the report of the committee of twenty-five are as follows: “On the details thus given of the honors paid to the

<sup>110</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 42.

<sup>111</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 43.

memory of Mr. Calhoun, it may be remarked that at each of the cities through which we passed, the ceremonies had some appropriate peculiarity. The simple and silent movement from the Capitol at Washington, where the eloquence of public and individual sorrow had so recently been heard; the emblems of respect at Alexandria; the honors to our sad procession as it moved slowly through Fredericksburg, with the military and civic escort of that city; the more elaborate arrangements at Richmond for the reception and charge of the remains for the night, and their redelivery the next day, with the kind attention to the comfort of the committees; the full and imposing procession through Petersburg, the church draped in crepe, and the informal courtesies of the citizens; the numerous array of private citizens at Wilmington, through whom the procession passed to the boat, all exhibited the common purpose in these several communities, with variety in the modes of manifesting their respect to the memory of the dead, and their kindness to the living.”<sup>112</sup>

“We entered the harbor of Charleston at nine o’clock on Thursday morning, the 25th April. A fog made the city indistinct to view, until we had approached quite near to it, when we observed that the houses were hung with emblems of mourning. The tone of deep feeling produced by the silent eloquence of these

<sup>112</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 50.

tokens was made deeper by the Sabbath-like stillness of the city. On our approaching the revenue cutter Crawford in the roads, she commenced the firing of minute guns. The Nina took her in tow, and a procession of boats was formed, consisting of the Nina and Wilmington, the revenue cutter, and the steamers Metamora and Pilot, the two latter with citizens on board. These vessels, all displaying emblems of mourning, arranged with remarkable care and taste, moved slowly several times along the entire line of the city, from the southern point of the Battery to the landing place at Smith's wharf, until the hour appointed for the landing. This novel procession was felt by all to increase the deep solemnity of the occasion. At twelve o'clock, the body of J. C. Calhoun was landed on the soil of his native State, to receive the honors of his own sorrowing people."<sup>113</sup>

"The revenue cutter Gallatin, the steamers Metamora and Pilot acting as an escort, with colors at half mast and draped in mourning, lay in her wake. Profound silence reigned around; no idle spectator loitered on the spot; the curiosity incident to the hour was merged into a deep feeling of respect, that evinced itself by being present only where that sentiment could with most propriety be displayed. The solemn minute gun, the wail of the distant bell, the far-off spires shrouded in the drapery of

<sup>113</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 51.

grief, the hearse and its attendant mourners waiting on the spot, alone bore witness that the pulse of life still beat within the city, that a whole people in voiceless woe were about to receive and consign to earth all that was mortal of a great and good citizen."<sup>114</sup>

From Smith's wharf, the imposing train advanced, by Boundary (now Calhoun) street, to the Citadel Square. "No sound was heard but the subdued murmur of the collected thousands."<sup>115</sup>

Of the various addresses at the Citadel Square, the following extracts are offered:

Governor Seabrook, among other things, said: "From the first day of Mr. Calhoun's protracted illness to the moment when death achieved his victory, you, Mr. Venable, were rarely absent from his bedside. With the anxious solicitude of a devoted friend, you ministered to his wants, and watched the reflux of that noble stream whose fertilizing powers were about to be buried in the great ocean of eternity. For services so disinterested, spontaneously bestowed by a stranger, I offer the tribute of thanks, warm, from overflowing hearts."<sup>116</sup>

Mr. Venable replied, in part: "Nothing has so fully convinced me of the extended popularity, I should rather say, feeling of veneration, towards the statesman whose death has

<sup>114</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 72.

<sup>115</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 74.

<sup>116</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 76.



called us together today as the high estimate which you and your people have placed upon the services of an humble friend. Sir, the impulses of humanity would have demanded nothing less, and that man is more than rewarded who is permitted to soothe the pain or alleviate the suffering of a philosopher, sage, patriot, and statesman, so exalted above his contemporaries that were we not admonished by his subjection to the invasion of disease and death we might well doubt whether he did not belong to a superior race." \* \* \* "But when, with this morning's dawn, I approached your harbor, and saw the city in the peaceful rest of the Sabbath, heard not the stroke of a hammer or the hum of voices engaged in the business of life; when, from the deck of the steamer, in the midst of your harbor, I could descry the habiliments of mourning which consecrated your houses, the stillness, the solemn stillness, spoke a language that went to my heart."<sup>117</sup>

The procession next moved through various streets of the city. "Along the streets through which the procession passed, the public and private buildings and temples of worship were draped with mourning, the windows and doors of the houses were closed, and no one was seen to gaze upon the spectacle; it seemed that those who did not participate directly in the obsequies were mourning within."<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 76.

<sup>118</sup> Carolina Tribute, p. 80.



The remains were finally received at the City Hall with all ceremony, and lay there in state until the next day, when they were removed to their last resting place in the western cemetery of St. Philip's Church. \* \* \*

"Such honors Ilion to her hero paid  
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade."

\* \* \* \* \*

The effort has been made to revive the spirit that presided over the obsequies of this illustrious man, extending as they did over nearly a month in the passage from Washington to Charleston, in the hope that the appreciation of that spirit may be considered worth the attention to detail which it involves. It may serve to illustrate, at least in some measure, "How touching is the loyalty of men to their sovereign man."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### “HIS RICHEST LEGACY TO POSTERITY.”

The attentive reader will not have forgotten that in the letter of Mr. Calhoun in reference to his acceptance of the Secretaryship of State he made mention of a project which he had in mind for leisure hours in the home routine to which at that time he looked forward. The home routine, as has been seen, was sadly broken up. In a letter written in 1847 he says: “But it seems to me the more I do, the more I am compelled to do, and the farther I recede from retirement.” Of leisure also, it may readily be gathered, there was scant measure granted him. But the project, in spite of official duties, social engagements, burden of responsibilities, and ill health, was executed. There is much in all this to show how near this project was to his heart. There are not wanting other side lights to illustrate the same fact. In the discriminating remarks above quoted, Mr. Venable does not fail, in describing Mr. Calhoun's last days, to lay particular emphasis on the concern shown by him in reference to the completion of this work. “His richest legacy to posterity,” are Mr. Venable's words. During his latter years, Mr. Calhoun con-

stantly refers to the progress of this work in his letters to his daughter, Mrs. Clemson, which is strong evidence of the interest he felt in it. The very last letter written to her, only a month before his death, contains the following passage: "Besides my correspondence, which, with Mr. Clemson, extends, when from home, to nine persons in my own family, and when at home, usually five or six, I have written between three hundred and fifty and four hundred pages of foolscap, in execution of the work I have on hand, since we parted, and have reviewed, corrected and had copied the elementary disquisition on government (now ready for the press), containing one hundred and twenty-five pages of foolscap. When I add that I have done all this in the midst of a round of company, and my many other engagements, I think you will see that I have a very good excuse if I have not written you as frequently as formerly."<sup>119</sup>

The intention to prepare such a work doubtless lay half expressed in Mr. Calhoun's mind a long time. The first reference to it which has been found in his correspondence occurs in a letter to Francis Wharton, written Christmas day, 1843: "The conception on that side of the Atlantic is universally false in reference to our system of government. It is indeed a most remarkable system—the most so that ever existed. I have never yet discussed it in its

<sup>119</sup> Correspondence, p. 782.

higher elementary principles, or rather, I ought to say, in reference to higher elementary principles of political science. If I should have leisure, I may yet do it."<sup>120</sup> Thus almost seven years elapsed from the first mention to the completion.

It seems certain that Mr. Calhoun realized thoroughly that what we now know has occurred would occur. Plainly he saw that the times immediately succeeding him would be clouded by passion, violence, and ignorance. Not until these had run their course would receptive ground be found for the seeds of wisdom which he knew it had been given to him to sow. All too well he knew that, plainly, explicitly, unmistakably, as he had declared his discoveries, the record by passion and slander would be distorted past recognition. Besides, the principles as declared by him during his political career were more or less intermingled with the current questions and local issues, hence all the more apt to be confused and sunk from sight. Thus, the true ultimate issue in Nullification was connected with the tariff, an involved and troublesome dispute in itself. The popular imagination, moreover, is ever prone to make matters personal. Thus there has been a tendency, not only among the illiterate, to make of Nullification a mere personal matter between Jackson and Calhoun. As was early remarked in these pages, it seems

<sup>120</sup> Correspondence, p. 558.

strange that any historian, with the precedent of Nullification before him, could fail to understand the true nature of the Civil War. The parallelism is perfect. Tariff in the Nullification crisis is the exact analogue of slavery in the Civil War. Mr. Alexander H. Stevens has given a complete and perfect exposition of this matter, in spite of which many continue to misunderstand.<sup>121</sup>

That all this misunderstanding, all this confusion of matter universally important with matter strictly local and temporary would prevail for many a year was precisely the state of affairs to which Mr. Calhoun looked forward, and against which he was anxious to provide every corrective in his power. It is very striking to observe, throughout the utterances of his riper years, an entire consciousness on his part that he would neither be heeded immediately nor understood. It is almost as though he were constantly addressing an audience hidden far away in the future, the hearers in his immediate presence being to all intents and purposes stone deaf. He well knew how truth has to fight its way.

To provide a brief and serviceable summary of his discoveries and their application was the object he had in view. Consequently, in this volume is contained the distilled essence of the long results of a lifetime. All heterogeneous

<sup>121</sup> War Between the States, 2 Vols., by Alexander H. Stepiens. National Publishing Co., 1868.

matter, all complicating detail, every irrelevance, all surplusage, is pruned away and eliminated, and the result is a handbook of political science, as remarkable for completeness as it is for brevity. Indeed, brevity is the difficulty at the same time that it is the merit of such a work. One who has given but indifferent attention to these subjects is wholly unprepared to derive the full benefit of what is here compressed into such narrow compass. Moreover, the minds of many, in reference to these topics, are in much less favorable condition than mere passivity; the minds of many are completely possessed by certain prejudices and misconceptions, which render the successful inoculation of correct ideas almost hopeless.

There were two matters in particular which Mr. Calhoun was desirous of explaining so that no one who chose honestly to investigate could fail to understand. One was heretofore indicated in the study of Nullification. Suffrage is *not* sufficient to guarantee liberty: not only is not sufficient, but with suffrage alone, misgovernment, tyranny, and oppression, will continue almost to the same extent as without it. In addition to suffrage, the weapon of nullification, check, veto, interposition, *must* be somehow placed in the hands of minorities, or constituent interests. This is the first point. To its elucidation is devoted the first part of the work, "The Disquisition on Government."

The other matter almost universally misun-

derstood is the fact that such a provision is *actually* a feature of the American Constitution. By an almost universal misconception the fact is not only overlooked, but an active and pernicious error usurps its place. The provision was incorporated in the American Constitution more by chance than from forethought. It arose from the fortuitous juxtaposition of separate local sovereignties. This essential feature, thus provided by chance, unless demonstrated with the utmost lucidity and insisted on with the utmost rigidity, is lost to sight, and error in this respect is wholly fatal. There is no halfway ground. Right understanding means permanence, stability, success. Wrong understanding means violence, revolution, failure. The American Constitution, rightly understood and construed, contains the necessary conservative principle; but under the largely predominating view, this principle is worse than lost; a conflicting, subversive principle is substituted in its place. To this end the second portion of the work is devoted, "The Treatise on the United States Constitution."

Is it not plain what a great stake is here to be lost or won? This it is that so aroused Carolina and Calhoun in the days of Nullification. This it is that Calhoun, in the years of his ripe wisdom, felt the world to stand in need of comprehending. Here is the explanation why this project was so near to his heart, and why, in the face of all interruptions and difficulties, he drove it through to completion.

To the words which a man pronounces in his last moments, the law, as well as the world at large, is accustomed to attach peculiar importance. Here is the legacy of one of the wisest men that ever lived, framed at a time when, had he been the most unprincipled adventurer, interest, prejudice, or any kindred motive, could have had not the least influence. When a man like Calhoun compresses his last breath into words of advice, the world will be the sufferer if the advice remains unheeded.

There are not wanting other circumstances to lend a peculiar sanction to this work. The foregoing pages have been put together to very little purpose if it does not appear from the most casual inspection that Mr. Calhoun's career was, to an extent wholly extraordinary, political. His education was scarce completed when he was plunged into political affairs. America, of all the countries since the world began, has been preëminently the pioneer in political science and political experiment. South Carolina, of all American States, from taste and inclination, as well as by reason of isolation and unique conditions, has been the very hotbed of political disputation and investigation. The period of Calhoun's life was a period of peculiar agitation and upheaval. And finally he, of all South Carolinians, by education and intellectual capacity, was the best fitted to digest the political pabulum thus afforded. A specialist attains to knowledge



undreamt of by the general practitioner. To a remarkable extent circumstances conspired to render Mr. Calhoun a specialist in political science. It is no wonder, then, that he should have attained to knowledge entirely too advanced for his contemporaries, entirely too advanced for several succeeding generations. The general public (to recur to the allusion of Mr. Venable) has not yet caught up with Bacon (witness patent medicines), and Bacon wrote some time before Calhoun.

It is remarkable how backward even the most cultivated and best informed foreigners are found to be in the knowledge of our institutions and of political science in general. Jefferson remarked this long ago. It seems difficult, almost impossible, for them to comprehend our federal system. Mr. Bryce, in explaining the Constitution, as was before remarked, hits every part of the target but the bull's eye. He was warm, as the children say, in hide and seek, for he does not fail to lay emphasis on the prominence in the system of the State governments, yet he fails to find the essential central truth.

"E pure muove," said Galileo when retiring from the council of adverse sages. The sages were doubtless learned, eminent, respectable; but Galileo saw, they did not see. The inertia of society is immense. Moreover, quacks and charlatans abound. A justifiable conservatism thus enlists itself on the side of inertia, and the

result is that granite mountains (thanks to dynamite) are less impenetrable than human heads. O! for some philosophic analogue of dynamite! With the aid of such it were possible, perhaps, to procure, even for new ideas, entrance and lodgment in their proper nidus.

In the speech on Oregon, Mr. Calhoun leaves on record an eloquent appeal to the two great Anglo-Saxon nations. Progress in peace, commerce, civilization, liberty, is the burden of that appeal. But of far wider application and far greater moment is this later appeal. It is an appeal not to one, nor to two nations: it is a precious message to all mankind. The American people, in part by chance, in part by patriotic endeavor, stumbled on one of the latest lessons of liberty. Jefferson in part profited by the opportunity, forecast and hinted at the policies so inculcated. Madison likewise, in part, profited by the opportunity. But it was left to Calhoun to receive the fading torch, to replenish its flame, and cherish it to fresh, glowing intensity, and set it up in a high place, to brighten all the future generations.

It is a grave and unusual responsibility to be charged with the delivery of a message to mankind. Calhoun did not shirk the responsibility; he appreciated it, assumed it, and, to the best of his ability, discharged it.

## APPENDIX A.

### “THE GREATEST FORENSIC DUEL EVER FOUGHT.”

It is a remarkable fact that in the course of the composition of this work the great passage-at-arms between Webster and Calhoun in the Senate in 1833 should have received only passing allusion. It would seem more natural that an event of such importance should have exacted a complete and detailed description. If any explanation is to be found for the omission, it must lie in the fact that the controversy, great as it was, is small compared with the subjects and issues with which it was connected and entrance upon which it naturally affords. It is as if a traveler entered upon a country before unknown through a mighty gateway supported by two giant pillars of heroic mold. But as he stood for the first time upon the threshold of the gateway, the prospect was suddenly opened to his vision of a domain so vast, so startling in its majesty and grandeur, as to absorb his whole attention and leave the noble gateway for a spell entirely forgotten.

The question immediately at issue between Calhoun and Webster related to a single historical occurrence—Was the Union in its

origin a league of States? Important, vital, as the question is, it pales to insignificance when set beside the wider issues which it naturally involves—What is the origin, the foundation, the true philosophy of government—a matter touching every race and every nation, embracing in its wide sweep the past history as well as the future expectations of mankind.

It is quite impossible here more than to mention this mighty struggle of Webster and Calhoun. Indeed, were Americans truly alive to the heritage which is theirs, it would be superfluous to describe again that memorable scene. It would be taught to every school child, and would be stored in the memory in company with the multiplication table.

It is to be hoped that every reader of these words, if he has not already done so, will speedily take down from the shelf the ponderous and (doubtless, alas!) dusty volumes, and read first Webster's speech of February of 1833, and then Calhoun's answer ten days later.

Different opinions as to the issue of that debate have long been entertained and probably will long continue to be. The question has agitated the American people already more than a hundred years. Some think it has been settled. Others think that it has not.

An excellent account and résumé (if the reader is too lazy to refer to the speeches them-

selves), is to be found in Mr. Stephens' "War Between the States," Vol. I, Chapters 7 and 8.

Mr. Stephens' judgment on the issue is in the following words: "This is quite enough of Mr. Calhoun's reply. I have read all of it that bears directly upon the main points in issue between them. On these points never was a man more completely crushed than Mr. Webster was. The argument is a crusher, an extinguisher, an annihilator!"

Governor Hammond (of South Carolina), in his oration on the life and services of Calhoun, a production, by the way, which should be in the hands of every student of American history, makes the following comment:

"\* \* \* A debate, however, arose in the Senate on the bill embracing the recommendations of the President—commonly called the Force Bill—which will go down to future times and live an imperishable monument of the patriotism and courage, the wisdom and foresight, the genius and eloquence, of Mr. Calhoun. His speech is not surpassed by any recorded in modern or in ancient times, not even by that of the great Athenian on the Crown.

"This debate can never be read without its being seen, and felt, that Mr. Webster, his only opponent worthy to be named, gifted as he is universally acknowledged to be, with talents of the highest order, and remarkable even more for his power of reasoning than for his brilliant

declamation, was on this memorable occasion a dwarf in a giant's grasp. He was prostrated on every ground that he assumed. And if logic, building on undoubted facts, can demonstrate any moral proposition, then Mr. Calhoun made as clear as mathematical solution his theory of our government and the right of each State to judge of infractions of the Constitution, and to determine the mode and measure of redress. When the dust of ages shall have covered alike the men, the passions and the interests of that day, this speech of Mr. Calhoun will remain to posterity, not merely a triumphant vindication of the State of South Carolina, but a tower-light to shed the brightest, purest, and truest rays on the path of every Confederacy of Free States that shall rise upon the earth."

Finally this account may be closed with an extract from an obscure Southern essayist, whence was derived the title under which these lines have been put together :

"The other occasion was the celebrated debate with Webster, when Webster made the mistake of attempting to maintain that the Constitution is not a compact. He made the best of a bad job" (sic), "it is true. His effort was characterized by all the adroitness and acumen of a master advocate, but on this point, despite his efforts, Calhoun crushed him utterly. It is here that, after demolishing the contentions of Webster, he goes on and fur-

ther, as if to forestall all doubt or question, and inquires why it is that the Senator, with all his mastery of the English language, with all his consummate skill and polish and address, has failed of his attempt? Because, he explains, of the impossibility of the task, the weight of which must crush the Senator or anyone else. The climax here reached of the greatest forensic duel ever fought is electric with interest. It is a moment of the greatest significance in American history. The true constitutional theory was fought through and established by one Titan statesman against a brother Titan before the eyes of all mankind. Webster, liberal and large man that he was, realized that he had come off second best, and never made reply to Calhoun's answer."





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